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ABSTRACT

Annotations of 82 articles and 32 reports, books, and studies related to public school choice are grouped under: (1) sources from a national perspective; (2) sources from a state perspective; (3) local choice plans; and (4) material useful to parents. Several annotations include information on ordering documents, and six contacts for further information are provided. (CLA)

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An Access Printout

on

Public School Choice:

From National Policy to Local Programs

January 1991

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Preface

Public School Choice is currently a topic receiving much attention in the press and much consideration by education policy makers, as a potential strategy for school improvement. The best choice plans provide both an opportunity for parents to choose a public school program for their children and to remain actively involved in the life of the school. This makes choice an issue of special interest to the National Committee for Citizens in Education, an organization committed to greater parental involvement in the public schools.

The subject of "Choice" is being discussed at many levels. The U.S. Department of Education has held hearings across the country to listen to public reaction to choice and has published several reports on the topic. A number of states have enacted legislation mandating parental choice; many others are in the process of considering a variety of proposals. And a few local school districts have taken the initiative to exercise their authority to institute choice plans within the district.

This annotated bibliography includes references to 82 articles and 32 reports, books, and studies -- all related to choice. The printout is divided into sections to enable the reader to review literature written from the national, state, local, or parent perspective. About half of the references were published in 1989; 70% are dated in the last three years -- 1988, 1989, and 1990.

If you are considering a school choice plan where you live you may want to secure some of these materials either from their publisher or through your local library.

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I. Introduction

This publication includes citations and summaries of articles from journals, magazines, newsletters, and a few newspapers; reports, books, and studies; and pamphlets, handbooks and other literature designed primarily for parents. Most of the material reviewed has been published since 1985; this reflects the recent surge of national attention focussed on public school choice as a mechanism to improve schools and bring about greater responsiveness of the public schools to the preferences and wishes of parents and students.

National Perspective

The theoretical, academic approach to public school choice is presented in the two books by Myron Lieberman, the essay by Richard Elmore published by the Center for Policy Research in Education, and the book receiving much national attention in 1990 -- Politics, Markets, and the Schools, by John Chubb and Terry Moe. All of these are summarized in Section II of this ACCESS Printout.

Four reports in this section include general descriptions of choice plans, the rationale and arguments for choice, and examples of the successful choice programs currently in operation: the publication by the National School Public Relations Association, the report by the New Jersey Department of Education, the publication of the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, and the "Annotated Catalog," published by the Metropolitan Affairs Corporation in Detroit, Michigan. A number of experts and well-known educators contributed to the compilation edited by Joe Nathan, entitled Public School Choice.

The report Improving Schools and Empowering Parents provides the perspective from the White House, focussing on two positive aspects of public school choice: (1) how choice can bring about structural changes in schools, increase accountability, and reduce the dropout rate, and (2) how choice can increase parental satisfaction and parent involvement. Another report published by the Federal government is Charles Glenn's description of choice in six foreign countries.

Planning for Schools of Choice, published by The New England Center for Equity Assistance, is a useful document in that it goes beyond the factual and descriptive approaches in most of the reports and provides specific suggestions, dos and don'ts for those considering the implementation of a choice plan; it also includes a list of key policy decisions needed for the successful transition to an effective choice plan.

With one notable exception, all of the reports in Section II take a positive view toward choice. The New Improved Sorting Machine, by Donald Moore and Suzanne Davenport with the Chicago advocacy organization Designs for Change, presents the results of a study of several high schools in four large cities. In those school systems students are given a choice of which type of school to attend. The study demonstrates that the availability of various types of high schools may provide some students with the opportunity to attend a better school or to receive better instruction. But there are many who are left behind in less effective schools and programs. Choice does not ensure that all educational opportunities are of high quality.

The Institute for Responsive Education's report entitled Parent Choice: A Digest of the Research includes summaries of research related to a number of choice-related topics, including equity, diversity, competition, school improvement and parent involvement. Additional reviews of the research literature are the subject of several articles by Mary Anne Raywid in Section III.

Many of the articles referenced in Section III are shorter versions or brief reviews of the books, reports, and studies summarized in Section II. However, in addition to the excellent articles by Mary Anne Raywid, especially focussed on research, several new perspectives and contributions should be noted.

Ann Bastian, from the New World Foundation, offers thoughtful insights on public school choice, and provides a framework for examining the implications of choice plans for equity, accountability, and governance issues. Denis Doyle suggests some historical reasons for the school system becoming centralized and standardized, and hypothesizes why school board members and administrators are indifferent or hostile toward choice. Scott Thompson's perspective, included in Education Week's "Commentary" provides a good illustration of Doyle's theory.

Ted Kolderie's article presents a very compelling argument for choice, divestiture, and diversification as mechanisms for ending the school district's monopoly on education. Though his terminology and theoretical approach are somewhat different from the changes proposed by John Chubb and Terry Moe in Politics, Markets, and the Schools, the direction strongly suggested by Kolderie is similar to the Chubb/Moe plan.

Several authors discuss the equity issues related to choice, whether choice plans will tend to favor children from middle-class, white families, while offering little opportunity to urban, low-income, minority students. The articles by Mary Hatwood Futrell and Charles Glenn include articulate statements which raise doubts about whether choice plans will offer equal opportunity for all. Patricia Lines takes a different position, asserting that choice can be a vehicle for redistribution of political and/or economic power.

Sections II and III contain summaries of 14 books and reports and 36 magazine, journal, and newspaper articles. Of these only one article is written by a representative of a minority group. Arturo Madrid and Juan Francisco Laro, writing in Basic Education, take the position that Latinos must be economically and politically empowered before they will be able to take advantage of choice.

State Perspective

The State of Minnesota of course is highlighted in many of the reports and articles, since it is the first state to have enacted and implemented a comprehensive statewide choice plan. Minnesota's plan is discussed in detail in the report Choice: Minnesota's Enrollment Options Program, compiled by the Minnesota Department of Education and published by the Education Commission of the States.

The articles by Jane Bangley (Education Daily), Hope Kessler (Education USA), and Ted Kolderie (Equity and Choice) provide information on the principles of the Minnesota plan as well as the various options and the timetable for implementation.

ECS (the Education Commission of the States) is the primary national organization involved in surveying state proposals and plans, monitoring their implementation, and defining and discussing policy issues. Their Policy Guide and Survey of State Initiatives are comprehensive and informative. The article by Chris Pipho and that from the State Education Leader, included in Section V, also include analytic information about state action.

Several other excellent reports included in Section IV discuss choice at the state level in New Jersey, Massachusetts, and New York. The reports by the Eagleton Institute of Politics and the New York State School Boards Association include results of surveys undertaken in both states. These may be of assistance to officials in other states studying various options for their own state.

The position of the National Governors' Association is presented in the article by Richard Lamm in Phi Delta Kappan.

The choice plan in Iowa is described in the article from the journal of the Iowa Association of School Boards. The legislation in Washington state and Colorado is briefly described in articles by William Snider and Mark Walsh in Education Week.

As in earlier sections of this bibliography, most of the material summarized here presents the positive side of the choice proposals, what they are intended to accomplish. The two articles by Lewis Finch, a superintendent from Minnesota, and one by Judith Pearson present their viewpoints about the negative aspects of choice.

Local Perspective

Of the five reports summarized in Section VI, four represent efforts to evaluate and assess various aspects of local choice plans: in Montclair, NJ; Montgomery County, MD; District 4 in New York City; and Chicago, IL. The research designs and evaluation goals are very different in these four studies. But they do offer examples of careful research and suggestions of outcome measures which might be used by others in evaluation of local choice programs.

Section VII includes articles about Montclair (NJ), Central Part East (NY), and Cambridge (MA) -- the well-established and successful local choice programs. Choice efforts in a number of other local districts are described in other articles, including:

* Richmond, California
* Buffalo, New York
* Eight Schools in Massachusetts
* Vancouver, Washington
* A Six-School Complex in Washington, DC
* Eugene, Oregon

The articles in this section largely present a positive, optimistic viewpoint toward choice. However, the article by William Snider in Education Week reports on the findings of three studies which conclude that choice plans may not achieve the desired outcomes of quality education for all and maintaining racial balance in the schools.

Especially for Parents

Last, but not least, is a section which includes materials especially prepared for, and useful to, parents. NCCE's position is that a key to the success of choice plans is the role of parents in the process. Parents include not just the middle-class, suburban parents who have typically influenced the public schools for the benefit of their own children, but all parents. Charles Glenn, in his article "Letting Poor Parents Act Responsibly," discusses how low-income, minority parents can be empowered, with the help of a good choice plan, to be effective advocates in obtaining quality education for their children.

NCCE's publication Public School Choice: An Equal Chance for All? provides a brief, informative introduction to the subject of choice, includes characteristics of equitable plans, a checklist for choosing the best school for each child, and suggestions for reaching low-income parents and those who primary language is not English.

Another very helpful pamphlet is published by OERI (Office of Education Research and Improvement) of the U.S. Department of Education. Choosing a School for Your Child, issued both in English and in Spanish, provides parents with assistance in deciding what type of school is best for their child's personality and learning style.

In his article in Phi Delta Kappan, Van Mueller includes six reasons why parents will inevitably be accorded wider choice and greater voice. The criteria and characteristics of effective choice plans from the parents' point of view are summarized in The National PTA's "Guidelines."

Several of the publications listed include especially good material on what types of programs might be offered as part of choice plans, and what steps to take to make an informed and wise decision on the plan to choose. These include the Consumer's Guide, by Evans Clinchy, and two pamphlets on the Minnesota program: one by the Minnesota Association of School Administrators and the other by the Minnesota Department of Education.

The School Book, by the Citizens League in Minneapolis, and the section entitled "Choices" from the Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal represent excellent examples of how information about public schools can be compiled and disseminated to parents.

The book on Planning for Parent Choice, by Evans Clinchy of the Institute for Responsive Education, offers a step-by-step guide to surveying parents as a way of finding out their educational preferences for their children. The article by Roland Charpentier is a good example of how a parent survey has been used to determine the types of schools parents want as part of the planning process for a local choice program.

Parent information centers are one strategy for ensuring that parents are well informed about their options and about the process for choosing a school for their child. Two centers are described in articles in this section: "At a Glance" from Equity and Choice offers a summary of the structure and operation of such a center in Cambridge, MA; the 14-page booklet "A Guide for Parents to District Five Schools," prepared by the Parent Center, is a good example of helpful information for parents.

II. Books, Reports, and Studies from a National Perspective

SOURCE:

Bamber, Chrissie, Public School Choice: An Equal Chance for All?, National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1990, 24 pp. softcover.

SUMMARY:

This booklet provides an introduction to public school choice for parents, citizens and educators. It emphasizes plans which give every family a fair chance to choose. The publication includes characteristics of equitable plans, a checklist for choosing the best school for each child, and suggestions for reaching low-income parents and those whose primary language is not English.

HOW TO ORDER:

National Committee for Citizens in Education
10840 Little Patuxent Parkway
Suite 301
Columbia, MD 21044
$5.00 plus $2.00 for postage and handling

SOURCE:

Chubb, John E. and Terry M. Moe, Politics, Markets, and America's Schools, 1990, 336 pp. The Brookings Institution.

SUMMARY:

The authors of this book assert that the fundamental causes of poor academic performance are to be found in the organization of the schools, which are based on a bureaucratic, hierarchical, centralized structure.

From a study of more than 400 American high schools and some 20,000 students, teachers, and principals, they find that the key to improved student achievement is an effective organization, characterized by strong leadership, clear and ambitious academic goals, professional teachers, and teamlike cooperation -- qualities that tend to flourish only when schools are given substantial autonomy from outside control.

After a comprehensive and careful analysis of the problem, the authors recommend a new system of public education, built around parent-student choice and school competition, that would promote school autonomy, thus providing a firm foundation for genuine school improvement and superior student achievement.

The authors propose a system in which the state no longer has the authority to control the schools. The state would have the responsibility for setting criteria that define what constitutes a "public school." Any group or organization, including private schools, could apply to the state and, if they meet these minimal criteria, be chartered as a public school and granted the right to accept students and receive public money.

Each student would be free to attend any public school in the state, regardless of district, with public money flowing to the school of choice. Every effort should be made to provide transportation for students who need it.

This is important in helping to open as many alternatives as possible to all students, especially the poor and those located in rural areas.

The state would provide a Parent Information Center, to collect comprehensive information on each school in the district and to meet personally with all parents to encourage them to visit the schools and to help them decide which schools meet their children's needs.

Schools would make their own admissions decisions, subject only to nondiscrimination requirements. Each school would be granted sole authority to determine its own governing structure. Teachers would continue to have the right to join unions and engage in collective bargaining, but the legally prescribed bargaining unit would be the individual school. The state would continue to certify teachers, but requirements would be minimal.

The state would not hold the schools accountable for student achievement; schools would be held accountable from below, by parents and students who directly experience their services and are free to choose.

"Schools would be legally autonomous: free to govern themselves as they want, specify their own goals and programs and methods, design their own organizations, select their own student bodies, and make their own personnel decisions. Parents and students would be legally empowered to choose among alternative schools, aided by institutions designed to promote active involvement, well-informed decisions, and fair treatment."

HOW TO ORDER:

The Brookings Institution
1775 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202/797-6265
$28.95 cloth; $10.95 paper

SOURCE:

Clinchy, Evans and Arick Kolb, Planning for Schools of Choice: Achieving Equity and Excellence, Book I: Rationale, March, 1989, 29 pages, The New England Center for Equity Assistance.

SUMMARY:

This is the first of four books on "controlled choice," to aid school personnel to think about choice as a way to restructure school systems and achieve desegregation, to learn how to develop a choice plan for their district, and to review the kinds of school organizations that might be developed for individual schools in the district.

"We are excited about controlled choice as a method of desegregation that is voluntary, empowers parents and school staff, and leads to new and exciting school organization and curriculum. It uses the best of the magnet schools concept....and celebrates the diversity found in American schools. Choice acknowledge that since not all children are alike or learn in the same way, so schools should be different too. Further, parents and students should be able to choose the schools they think are suitable for them."

The four chapters in this book summarize its contents:

I. The Case for Choice: Moving Towards Equity and Educational Excellence
II. Choice and Desegregation: Case Examples (Cambridge, Lowell, Fall River, Community School District Four)
III. Planning for Choice: Some Do's and Don'ts
IV. The Development of Choice Plans: An Overview (Key Policy Decisions Needed for Choice Plans

HOW TO ORDER:

New England Center for Equity Assistance
290 South Main Street
Andover, MA 01810

SOURCE:

Elmore, Richard F., Choice in Public Education, Center for Policy Research in Education, December 1986, 40 pages.

SUMMARY:

There are two fundamental questions of educational choice: should parents and students be empowered to choose among schools, or among programs within schools? And should educators be empowered to organize and manage schools, to design educational programs, to recruit and select students, and to receive public funds for providing education to those students?

The first question might be called the "demand-side" question. It poses the issue of whether the consumers of education should be given the central role in deciding what kind of education is appropriate for them. The second is the "supply-side" question. It raises the issue of whether the providers of education should be given the autonomy and flexibility to respond to differences in the judgments of consumers about what constitutes appropriate education.

This report examines the case for choice and discusses the policy options faced by school boards and policymakers, including finance, attendance, staffing, content, and school organization.

The report comes to the following conclusions:

* Policies affecting choice must be evaluated from both the demand and the support side. Providing consumers with greater educational choice while at the same time constraining the ability of educators to respond to consumer preferences will only increase dissatisfaction with schools.

* The implementation of policies affecting the four major elements of the educational system -- finance, attendance, staffing, and content -- can provide policymakers with a wide range of options for enhancing and constraining choice. The current system of local bureaucratic centralization represents only one of a large number of possible ways of organizing public education.

* There is little evidence that greater choice for consumers and providers of education will, by itself, dramatically change the performance of schools. But there are still substantial reasons for policymakers to consider initiating experiments in enhanced choice.

HOW TO ORDER:

Publications Department
The RAND Corporation
1700 Main Street, PO Box 2138
Santa Monica, CA 90406
213/393-0411
Report No. JNE-01 - $4.00

SOURCE:

Glenn, Charles L., Choice of Schools in Six Nations: France, Netherlands, Belgium, Britain, Canada, West Germany, December 1989, 238 pages, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

SUMMARY:

The author, a well-known consultant on the issue of choice and a staff member of the Massachusetts Department of Education, reviewed the national educational systems of 25 countries for this study. He concluded that the information gathered on six countries was comprehensive enough for inclusion in this survey on parental choice: France, Netherlands, Belgium, Britain, Canada, and West Germany. He mentions that a few other countries, Australia, Spain, Denmark, Israel, and Sweden are also involved in considering some form of "choice" in their educational systems.

Three aspects of parent choice are covered in this book: its historical background; the empirical research, which is quite scarce; and the current debate over whether it should be extended or curtailed. The focus of this study is on education in the developed Western democracies. "Only in these societies has the interplay occurred between a State-mandated program of universal education and a recognition, by the State, of the right of parents to have their children educated in other than the officially established system."

Glenn analyzes the role of religion and the church as a major force in competition with the State on the issue of education. He suggests that the struggle over parent choice in recent years has been less a matter of the conflicting claims to loyalty of Church and State as rival powers than of the resistance of individuals to the claims of the State
to know what is good for their children and to impose a single state pedagogy for all.

The book concludes with the author's carefully articulated personal reflections on the issue of choice. An extensive bibliography from each of the six countries discussed is included.

HOW TO ORDER:

Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402

SOURCE:

Improving Schools and Empowering Parents: Choice in American Education. A Report based on the White House Workshop on Choice in Education, October 1989, 48 pages.

SUMMARY:

School choice has emerged as a key to restructuring America's system of elementary and secondary education. To demonstrate the value of allowing parents more choice in where their children attend school, the White House and the U.S. Department of Education hosted a workshop on January 10, 1989. Educators, policymakers, parents, and students from throughout the country gathered in Washington, DC to discuss choice and study the possibilities of beginning choice programs in their states and districts.

This report describes successful choice programs Minnesota, New York, Massachusetts, Oregon, and California. It also includes discussion of the two themes of the conference:

* **Improving schools**
  1. Choice can bring basic structural change to our schools
  2. Schools of choice recognize individuality
  3. Choice fosters competition and accountability
  4. Choice can improve educational outcomes
  5. Schools of choice can keep potential dropouts in school and draw back those who have already left

* **Empowering parents**
  6. Schools of choice can increase parents' freedom
  7. Choice plans increase parent satisfaction and involvement in the schools
  8. Schools of choice can enhance educational opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged parents

HOW TO ORDER:

Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402
Stock number 065-000-00386-4.
$3.00 per copy.

SOURCE:

Lieberman, Myron, Public School Choice: Current Issues/Future Prospects, 1990, 199 pages, Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publishing Company.

SUMMARY:

This book includes a full discussion of the pros and cons of public school choice, by a scholar who has studied many aspects of the issue. The rationale presented for adopting programs of choice includes:

1) Choice introduces competition and market processes to education;
2) It provides disadvantaged students with the opportunity to attend better schools;
3) Choice is a way of avoiding excessive bureaucratization;
4) It involves diversity in pedagogical styles and program options for different types of students;
5) Choice will result in greater accountability;
6) It will lead to greater satisfaction of parents and students; and
7) Choice will result in a higher level of professionalism among teacher.

The chapters of the book discuss and analyze the following topics: competition under public school choice, parent empowerment, accountability, student outcomes, information issues, school-based management, the perspectives of teachers and teacher unions and factors such as student and parent commitment and the development of specialized programs.

Dr. Lieberman also includes a discussion of the politics of public school choice, the positions and reactions of interest groups, national organizations, and political parties.

In the final chapter, the author concludes that, in spite of all the reasons and factors put forth in previous chapters, the case for public school choice is weak, and the obstacles to its successful implementation are many. The final pages of his text are devoted to an analysis of the Chubb/Moe proposal which would provide for the establishment of public schools that are not affiliated with any school district. Private schools and/or denominational schools would also have the right to become "public schools" and could receive public funds.

HOW TO ORDER:

Technomic Publishing Company, Inc.
851 New Holland Avenue, Box 3535
Lancaster, PA 17604
800/225-7931; 508/470-1080
$32.50

SOURCE:

Lieberman, Myron, Privatization and Educational Choice, 1989, 386 pages, New York: St. Martin's Press.

SUMMARY:

This book is an effort to explain the author's viewpoint about what must be done to improve elementary and secondary education in the U.S. He does not agree with conventional reform proposals (better school boards, more qualified teachers, higher teacher salaries, more homework, strengthening students discipline, etc.), but instead argues for the importance of private schools and for-profit educational service provides in order to provide competition to the public schools.

The author refers to these alternatives to the traditional public schools as "privatization," which involves transferring activities conducted by public employees to the private sector. He sees a strong relationship between privatization and educational choice, and argues that educational choices can be enhanced through the utilization of a variety of options, including contracting, vouchers, load shedding, franchising, subsidies to nongovernmental suppliers, and construction of public facilities with leaseback arrangements.

This book is addressed primarily to state policymakers since it is at the state level that the author believes that major public education reform must take place. But he also seeks to inform business leaders, school boards, school administrators, teachers, and parents, on the importance of privatization and educational choice.

HOW TO ORDER:

St. Martin's Press, Inc.
175 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10010
$12.95, Paper.

SOURCE:

Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, The Right to Choose: Public School Choice and the Future of American Education, Education Policy Paper Number 2, June 1989, 34 pages.

SUMMARY:

In 1989 and early 1989, the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research sponsored a series of forums in New York and London focusing on the concept of parental choice. This report is drawn from the presentations made at these forums.

Each section represents an aspect of the issue:

1. The Problem: A Depressing Look at Education in America Today, by Chester Finn, Jr.

2. The Theory: The Rationale for Educational Choice
What Makes Schools Work? by John Chubb
What Makes Religious Schools Different? by James Coleman

3. The Solution: Educational Choice in Practice
Choice in Minnesota, by Joe Nathan
Choice in East Harlem, by Seymour Fliegel
Creating the Conditions for Choice, by Cole Glenn

HOW TO ORDER:

Manhattan Institute for Policy Research
42 East 71st Street
New York, NY 10021
212/988-7300

SOURCE:

Metropolitan Affairs Corporation, Schools of Choice: An Annotated Catalog of Key Choice Elements: Open Enrollment, Diversity and Empowerment, 1988, 63 pages.

SUMMARY:

The model used as the basis for this report defines schools of choice as those offering one or more of three factors:

* open enrollment - the freedom for families to choose the elementary or secondary full-time public school of attendance;

* teacher empowerment - the opportunity for school staff to create their own organization and program components;

* diversity - the creation or organization of program components to reflect the differences in student and community needs, interests, and preferences.

The information for this "catalog" was gathered through extensive reading of the literature, surveys of more than 200 schools, interviews with authorities in the field of choice, and visiting school districts. In addition to a discussion of the three key factors identified above, this report includes descriptive case studies of five school districts (Dade County, Detroit Public Schools, New York City, Flint Public Schools, and Rochester, NY City School District), and shorter descriptions of choice options in 26 other districts.

HOW TO ORDER:

Metropolitan Affairs Corporation
660 Plaza Drive, Suite 1900
Detroit, MI 48226
313/961-2270

SOURCE:

Moore, Donald R. and Suzanne Davenport, The New Improved Sorting Machine: Concerning School Choice, February 1989, 120 pages, Designs for Change.

SUMMARY:

This publication reports on the results of a study of placement and labeling of high school students in four large cities, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Boston. The four factors examined were admission to high school, tracking and grouping within high schools, promotion and non-promotion from grade to grade, and student attendance and discipline. The researchers focussed on the ways in which these placement and labeling practices affected those students at greatest risk of school failure, including low-income, minority, limited English proficient, handicapped, and low-achieving students.

The analysis of high school admissions and of the role of high school options demonstrates the positive contribution that high quality options schools and programs can make in improving the education for the students that they serve and, in some instances, for improving the educational experiences of students at risk. But the study also makes it clear that high school options have great potential for increasing educational inequality, creating a new form of segregation based on a combination of race, income level, and previous success in school.

The report concludes with a final note: "As they are currently being implemented in the four cities studied, options schools and programs represent a major assault on the educational opportunities of the nation's most vulnerable children. They often constitute a new form of segregation, based not simply on race, but on a combination of race, income level, and previous school success.....public school choice must be carefully regulated and should be viewed as only one part of an effective and equitable effort to improve public schools. Public school choice is not a panacea..."

HOW TO ORDER:

Designs for Change
220 South State Street, Suite 1900
Chicago, IL 60604
312/922-0317

SOURCE:

Nathan, Joe, Editor, <u>Public Schools by Choice: Expanding Opportunities for Parents, Students, and Teachers</u>, 1989, 266 pages, The Institute for Learning and Teaching.

SUMMARY:

"The authors of this book hope our words will be productive and provocative. Each of us is committed to public education... We know that no one strategy will solve all of education problems, but we agree that expanding parental and educator choice among public schools is a central element of improving American education."

This is how Joe Nathan begins the introduction to this compilation of articles about the various aspects of the issue of public school choice. The book is organized into three sections. The first offers a rationale for choice among public schools, based on research and theory. The four chapters in this section are by Mary Anne Raywid, Charles Glenn, John Brandl, and Herbert Walberg.

The second section offers experiences from several states and districts which have expanded choice among public schools. Two chapters, by John Merrow and Sy Fliegel, describe the New York District 4 program. Schools of choice in Cambridge, MA, are discussed by Robert Peterkin and Dorothy Jones. Choices programs in Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Florida are described by Charles Glenn, Jessie Montano, and Roseanne Wood respectively. The final section looks ahead, with chapters by Adam Urbanski, Diane Divoky and Joe Nathan.

The contributors to this book all believe in public education as a force to improve society by building a more just and equitable country. They all have concluded that providing choice is central to equal educational opportunity.

HOW TO ORDER:

The Institute for Learning and Teaching
1852 Pinehurst
St. Paul, MN 55116
$6.95

SOURCE:

National School Public Relations Association, <u>Choice in Schools: What's Ahead and What to Do</u>, 1985, 57 pages.

SUMMARY:

Choice is one promising path that public schools can follow to improve public education in this country. This report suggests that choice is a topic that decisionmakers need to consider carefully; its purpose is to examine the evolution of choice, what it offers parents and students and where it may be headed in the years to come.

The thirteen chapters cover a wide range of topics, including:

Research on Choice
The Magnet School
Los Angeles: A Study in Choices
Private Schools
Homes as Schools
The Voucher Idea
The Issue of Tax Credits

The report concludes with a section on steps school districts should take to plan for choice, a checklist for a public relations plan for education choices, and a short bibliography.

HOW TO ORDER:

National School Public Relations Association
1501 Lee Highway, Suite 201
Arlington, VA 22209
(703)528-5840

SOURCE:

New Jersey State Department of Education, Public School Choice: National Trends and Initiatives, December, 1988, 116 pages.

SUMMARY:

This report is designed to provide a framework and conceptual base for a statewide discussion of public school choice. It offers a review of choice activities in other states and an analysis of typical components in a choice program.
Organized into five main chapters, the study starts with an explanation of the concept of choice followed by a review of the historical background of the modern choice movement. Next is a detailed description of use of magnet schools in systems of choice, followed by a review of choice programs around the nation, including indepth portraits of programs in Minnesota, Massachusetts, and New York City. Chapter Four analyzes the shared characteristics of the choice programs studied including school size, school bureaucracy, development of a sense of community, and the role of parents.

The concluding chapter contains summaries and analyses of the main types of choice programs being used in the nation, including intradictrict choice, interdistrict choice, special programs for high-risk students and post-secondary education, and magnets. An extensive bibliography is included.

HOW TO ORDER:

New Jersey State Department of Education
225 West State Street, CN 500
Trenton, NJ 08625
PTM 800.52

SOURCE:

Raywid, Mary Anne, "The Case for Public Schools of Choice," 1989, 45 pages, Fastback 283, Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

SUMMARY:

In this pamphlet, the author makes a case for public schools of choice based on evidence from the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers. This is followed by a brief overview of the extent of schools of choice, the nature of their support, their organizational features, and their accomplishments.

The phrase "schools of choice" can refer to a broad category of organizational structures. In this publication, the two major types reviewed and discussed are alternative schools and magnet schools. Alternative schools usually are established as a single program, for the purpose of responding to the unmet needs or interests of particular groups of students, parents, or teachers. A magnet school is more likely to be one of several such schools within a district, established to achieve desegregation and/or to offer quality educational programs around a common theme, for example, science and math, health services, performing arts, or international studies.

The author concludes with some brief explanations as to why schools of choice have not been more widely adopted, since they appear to offer positive outcomes in terms of student achievement and parent and teacher satisfaction.

HOW TO ORDER:

Phi Delta Kappa
P.O. Box 789
Bloomington, IN 47402
(812) 339-1156

SOURCE:

Zerchykov, Ross, Parent Choice: A Digest of the Research, February 1987, 148 pages, Institute for Responsive Education.

SUMMARY:

This is the first of a series of publications on choice; it is designed to "shed some light on the costs and benefits of different kinds of parent choice and provide summary answers to the most frequently asked questions about parent choice, based on an analysis of the research and evaluation students of various parent choice initiatives in the U.S."

The report is divided into three sections. The first provides a brief explanation of six "policy" models: the unregulated voucher, the regulated voucher, public schools of choice, family choice, peaceful uses of voucher, and controlled choice.

The next section includes summaries of the research related to seven issues: choice and costs; do parents want more choice?; factors influencing choice; choice and equity; choice, competition and diversity; choice and school improvement, and choice and parent involvement.

The research studies which provide the "data" for the issue summaries above are included in eleven "briefs." Also included is a bibliography.

This is a very readable publication; it provides basic, practical information about a complicated subject in simple and understandable language.

HOW TO ORDER:

Institute for Responsive Education
605 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 353-3309

III. Magazine and Journal Articles from a National Perspective

SOURCE:

Basic Education, Vol. 34, No. 3, November 1989. Includes a number of articles on choice.

SUMMARY:

1) "No Simple Course," by Patte Barth.

"At the heart of the argument against choice is the issue of equity. This fear is the legacy of the Reagan era's proposed voucher system -- essentially a public subsidy for private-sector schools -- and existing magnet-school programs that, by skimming the brightest and best students from the community, are no more than tracking on an even more divisive scale."

2) "School Choice," by Lauro F. Cavazos.

"A growing awareness of choice alternatives, combined with the demands of concerned parents and teachers, is the surest route to the kind of educational reform that will guarantee our ability to compete and prosper as a free nation in the twenty-first century."

3) "A Decade of Distraction," by Arturo Madrid and Juan Francisco Lara.

"School choice would be a significant option if Latinos were both economically and politically empowered. Until we are it will be difficult for us to be full partners in deliberations over the distribution of resources and even more difficult for us to assure equity of educational outcomes."

4) "Socrates and East Harlem," An interview with Deborah Meier.

SOURCE:

Bastian, Ann, "Thoughts on School Choice," Education Digest, February 1990.

SUMMARY:

The author outlines potential negative impacts of choice plans on equal opportunity, accountability, and democratic governance.

* Equity impacts - students and teachers may be "creamed," so that chosen schools attract high achievers while poorer schools do not. Parent involvement may decrease rather than improve.

* Accountability impacts - schools may stress public relations and packaging over substance, and reliance on standardized testing may increase.

* Governance impacts - parents may no longer be taxpayers and voters in the district their children attend, resulting in isolation from community life.

She cautions that "Reasonable remedies to some of these problems require much greater caution and commitment than most choice plans demonstrate thus far."

SOURCE:

Bastian, Ann, "Unwrapping the Package: Some Thoughts on School Choice," March 1989, 8 pages, The New World Foundation.

SUMMARY:

"The record shows only one thing thus far: choice is a complex, double-edged issue, not a quick-fix for school improvement. There is nothing inherent in the choice concept that makes it automatically achieve such goals as quality, diversity and democracy in education.

"Optimally, choice will follow from a restructuring program that ensures all students have quality alternatives from which to choose, all families will be fully informed of their options, all staffs will be engaged by and trained for their school mission, and every participant will have equal access, both physical and cultural access, to the school of choice.

"In the absence of ideal conditions, there are a number of potential problems to assess in establishing any choice plan. First and foremost, we should be concerned about the potential for the further segregation of students along the well-entrenched lines of class, race, gender and handicapping condition...

"What if there are not enough 'good schools' to go around?... How far will students have to go to find a good school and how many spaces will be open? What kinds of kids will have the stamina to strike out on their own -- and who will be left behind?

"How will parents understand what options are available and what schools are really right for their child? How will parents get to this school or influence its policies, beyond signing the enrollment form. Why will the schools such students leave behind be any better off or more compelled to change, when they are already dumping grounds for the educationally dispossessed and know it?"

HOW TO ORDER:

The New World Foundation
100 East 85th Street
New York, NY 10028
212/249-1023

SOURCE:

Bolick, Clint, "A Primer on Choice in Education: Part I -- How Choice Works," Backgrounder, March 21, 1990, The Heritage Foundation.

SUMMARY:

"The lessons of the 1980s are clear: spending more money and fiddling modestly will not improve the performance of American students. What will is competition among schools."

This "Backgrounder" describes and analyzes magnet schools, open enrollment, and controlled choice. It discusses several strategies which would include private schools, tuition tax credits, vouchers, and home schooling.

The article reviews the arguments in favor of and against choice, provides evidence of the growing consensus for choice, and asserts that choice can help poor families.

"Policy makers no longer lack the tools to improve educational quality and to expand opportunities for those who need them the most. The results are in, and they are encouraging: choice works and the greater the choice, the greater the results."

HOW TO ORDER:

The Heritage Foundation
214 Massachusetts Avenue N.E.
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 546-4400

SOURCE:

"Choice in Education," Remarks Made by Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos at the Education Press Association "Newsmaker" Luncheon, National Press Club, May 19, 1989.

SUMMARY:

A discussion of how to restructure American education through choice; Secretary Cavazos' speech concludes with the following:

"'He is free who lives as he chooses,' a Greek philosopher wrote nearly 2000 years ago. Americans today still hold firmly to this ancient but timeless ideal. To be an American means to have choices. Yet, ironically, we are often powerless to make one decision with a profound and enduring effect...where to send our children to school."

SOURCE:

Chubb, John, "Making Schools Better: Choice and Educational Improvement," Equity and Choice, May 1989.

SUMMARY:

In this article, the author cites a study of 500 high schools which concluded that the most important factor associated with an effective, successful school is the organization of the school. This refers to leadership, professionalism of teachers and administrators, whether they function as a team (in contrast to a bureaucracy) and the level of independence or autonomy in the school.

Chubb compares public and private schools, noting that public schools tend to be more centralized and more bureaucratized than private schools whose major task is to attract parents and students and provide them with satisfactory services.

He concludes that "the surest way to get autonomy and accountability into the public school system is not through regulation or spending, but through a mechanism of choice...vouchers, open enrollments, magnet schools, and others."

SOURCE:

"COMMENTARY: Perspectives on Public-School 'Choice'," Education Week, April 19, 1989.

"Improvement Threatened by 'Stampede' for Choice," by Scott D. Thompson.

"Interdistrict Programs Offer 'Expanded Opportunities,'" by Joe Nathan.

SUMMARY:

In this "Commentary," Scott Thompson, the Executive Director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, asserts that choice will result in a system of schools which have many different levels of quality, leaving the "mediocre" schools with no motivation for improvement. Joe Nathan, on the other hand, writes "While public-school choice programs will not solve all of our schools' problems, well-designed plans can help provide the freedom educators seek, the expanded opportunities many students need, and the dynamism the public-education system requires."

SOURCE:

Doyle, Dennis P., "Here's why school choice will boost student motivation -- and learning," and "Our one-size-fits-all public schools derive from a 19th-century concept in need of updating." The American School Board Journal, July 1989.

SUMMARY:

"The issue in school choice is the oldest idea in education: motivation. A school that is chosen is a school in which children, parents, and teachers are collaborators, accomplices if you will. Each has a set of expectations about the other. Schools can expect students to meet their standards because the students are there voluntarily. So, too, parents and students can expect schools they choose to meet their obligations to their students."

The author hypothesizes the reasons why so many school board members and administrators are indifferent or hostile toward choice systems. He discusses two explanations: (1) the view that public schools are democratic institutions and that democracy somehow demands uniformity, and (2) the belief that the school board and its administrators know more about good or appropriate education than parents and children.

In the second article, Doyle traces the schools' historical development which was influenced in the late 19th and early 20th century by the Scientific Management movement, promoted by Frederick Taylor. The impact on the schools was to standardize them by centralizing decision making, establishing work rules and schedules, and imposing a curriculum every teacher must follow.

SOURCE:

"The Fight over School Choice: Should parents decide where their children are taught?" Time Magazine, March 13, 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article summarizes the major arguments for and against choice, lists some of the state and school districts where it is being tried, and quotes the positions of educators and political leaders.

SOURCE:

Finn, Chester E., Jr., "Educational Choice: Theory, Practice, and Research," Equity and Choice, Spring 1986.

SUMMARY:

The author begins this article with the observation that educational choices are already available to a segment of the population, and that those families with higher incomes are more likely to exercise choice by enrolling their children in private schools. "The ongoing debate is not whether but how government should support choice and for whom?"

Another reality is that those who want choice the most -- the poor, inner-city dwellers, and blacks and other minorities -- are the ones least likely to enjoy it, because of economic barriers. Finn's response to these issues, excerpted from testimony given before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Affairs

in October 1985, provides a useful discussion of the research evidence answering the questions:

* Who wants choice?
* Who has it now?
* What would the impact of choice be on students?
* On diversity?
* What impact would expanded choice have on equity?

SOURCE:

Fiske, Edward B., "Wave of Future: A Choice of Schools," The New York Times, June 4, 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article reviews choice plans in Minnesota, Boston, Cambridge, and East Harlem. It also includes statement from proponents and opponents of this movement.

SOURCE:

Futrell, Mary Hatwood, "Some Equity Concerns About Choice and Vouchers in Education," Equity and Choice, Spring 1986.

SUMMARY:

This article is taken from testimony given at the National Governors' Association Task Force on Parental Involvement and Choice, at hearings held in Denver in December of 1985. Futrell argues that choice can become a euphemism for elitism and separatism.

In discussing the "downside of choice," she raises two additional equity considerations: that "two classes of schools may be created; one on a fast track to improvement, the other to neglect and decline," and that "the desire to make some schools more attractive than others will cause inequitable allocation of resources."

SOURCE:

Glenn, Charles L., "Putting Choice to Work for Public Education," Equity and Choice, May 1986, Volume II.

SUMMARY:

In this article, the author outlines the fundamentals of how parental choice can be put to work to increase educational equity, improve the schools, and boost public support for public education. He starts with three basic principles:

(1) the primary responsibility for a child's development rests with the parents;

(2) society has a special responsibility to assure that education is provided fairly; and

(3) there are certain things which every American child should learn.

Dr. Glenn goes on to discuss both the positive and negative aspects of school choice, and to conclude that "conditional choices work powerfully for school improvement, enhanced morale on all sides, and increased public support for public education."

SOURCE:

Glenn, Charles, "The Significance of Choice for Public Education," Equity and Choice, Spring 1985, Volume I, Number 3.

SUMMARY:

This piece is the opening statement by Dr. Charles Glenn at a February 1985 meeting to discuss the Minnesota open enrollment proposal. The author raises his two primary concerns about choice:

(1) that the encouragement of choice will undermine or destroy the public education system, and

(2) that it will result in unequal opportunity and segregation.

"Uncontrolled school choice has by-and-large operated to provide superior opportunities to white and middle-class children and to reinforce racial separation based on residence. And racial integration has often been resisted in the name of a right to choose one's children's classmates."

Dr. Glenn goes on to illustrate various aspects of choice plans with a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the Metco program, an interdistrict transfer program in Massachusetts.

SOURCE:

Grasso, Christopher, "Public Supports Parental Choice, but is Split on its Impact, Poll Shows," Education Daily, August 25, 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article reports on data from the Phi Delta Kappa Gallup poll concerning attitudes of the public toward choice plans.

SOURCE:

The Heritage Foundation, "The States Teach a Lesson in Offering Choice in Education," Backgrounder, No. 620, December 1, 1987.

SUMMARY:

This issue of Backgrounder discusses examples of choice plans:

Example #1: How Choice Aids Desegregation -- New York and Massachusetts.

Example #2: Reducing Dropout Rates through Choice -- Washington State.
Example #3: Promoting Excellence through Choice - Minnesota

Example #4: Choice Ensures Quality for Rural Students - Vermont

The article concludes with a section on "The Missing Ingredient in Choice: The Private Sector," and argues that only by including private schools will competition stimulate excellence.

SOURCE:

Kolderie, Ted, "The States Will Have To Withdraw the Exclusive," Public Services Redesign Project, 7/28/90, 14 pages.

SUMMARY:

In this paper, the author contends that the exclusive franchise is the heart of the problem of the failure of school reform. By the term exclusive franchise, Kolderie means that the local school district has the final decision about improvement. Even though the state imposes criteria, standards, etc. to bring about district with an "exclusive" cannot be forced to change. He argues that the state's job should not be to run the schools, but to provide a workable system for those who do.

Kolderie proposes two steps to "withdraw the exclusive:"

(1) Attendance decisions should be transferred from the district to the parent and student, so that they have a choice of schools. The district can no longer take its "customers" for granted, and will have to provide a desirable school environment and course of study to attract parents and students.

(2) Choice is not sufficient to bring about the changes needed; there must be choice(s) available. Diversification means that new public schools will appear sponsored by some organization other than the local district. Sponsors could be colleges and universities, local government, states, or federal government, business firms, groups of parents, or educators.

Kolderie not only discusses the theoretical and educational reasons for these changes, but also raises a number of practical questions about liability, space, admissions decisions, revenue, and accountability, and proposes feasible answers to them.

Beyond the strategies of choice and diversification, Kolderie proposes another one designed to bring about the changes needed more rapidly than the other two. Divestiture means that the local school board would select organizations to start new schools, contract with them to provide educational services, and monitor and evaluate how well they are doing the job.

"The state cannot 'do' improvement. The state must do things that cause improvement. Incentives are best: better than mandates; better than money. The state should remove from the district its ability to take its students for granted, by making it possible for new and different public schools to appear, where the kids live and which kids can choose. The district will then find improvement necessary, in its own interest."

HOW TO ORDER:

Center for Policy Studies
59 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102
612/224-9703

SOURCE:

Lines, Patricia M. "Peaceful Uses for Tuition Vouchers," Equity and Choice, Spring 1986.

SUMMARY:

The author of this article suggests that only limited and regulated versions of the voucher idea are politically viable, but goes on to present an interesting discussion of some "peaceful" uses of vouchers to promote racial balance and better serve students at risk.

"Peaceful" means "regulated" and "targeted," not only at specific educational issues, but also at empowerment, at "how choice, with funding to back it up, can redistribute political or economic power to those that do not presently possess much of either." Vouchers could give minority parents more political clout and more equal say over the shape of desegregation.

Lines goes on to discuss the Equity and Choice Act, the federal proposal for providing vouchers directly to the parents of Chapter 1 eligible students. These vouchers could then be redeemed in any public or non-public school the parents chose.

SOURCE:

"Merits of School Choice Stir Debate," Education USA, March 6, 1989.

SUMMARY:

Reports on a conference on choice held in Minneapolis in March, 1989. During the conference..."proponents argued choice offers educational opportunity to low- and moderate-income parents, stimulates school improvement through competition and empowers teachers and parents in the educational process.

"However, other conference participants said they believe competition for students will create a false sense of security, foster elitism and discrimination and ignore other fundamental problems in education."

SOURCE:

Moore, Donald R. and Suzanne Davenport, "High School Choice and Students At Risk," Newsletter, Vol. 3, No. 2, Fall 1988, National Center on Effective Secondary Schools, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1025 W. Johnson Street, Madison, WI 53706.

SUMMARY:

Donald Moore and Suzanne Davenport, researchers for Designs for Change in Chicago, summarize the results of their study of admission procedures and enrollment patterns in selective and non-selective high schools in Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. They found that educational choice was, in the main, operating to the detriment of students at risk. This article gives a brief summary of their study, The New Improved Sorting Machine, and lists a number of recommendations to big-city school systems based on their findings.

SOURCE:

Moore, Donald R. and Suzanne Davenport, "High School Choice and Students at Risk," Equity and Choice, February 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article provides a summary of the study of student placement and labeling at the high school level in four large school systems: New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Boston. This research analyzed admissions policies, the demographics of the students attending different types of school, and the impact of academically selectively high schools on the operation of neighborhood high schools.

The authors report that educational choice in the systems studied was operating to the detriment of students at risk. The establishment of magnet schools and other alternative schools of choice was intended to provide students with choices, but too frequently has left the typical entering high school student in big cities (and especially students at risk) out in the cold.

The article concludes with a list of recommendations which might be followed to enable at risk students to benefit from available educational options.

SOURCE:

Nathan, Joe, "Before adopting school choice, review what works and what fails," The American School Board Journal, July 1989.

SUMMARY:

The author, who has advised school systems, governors, and state legislatures across the U.S. on choice, urges school boards to examine the research and the components of existing plans and to consider their own choice plan.

Although 71% of the public supports the idea of choice, many school boards are not always enthusiastic.

Nathan cites the 120 research studies, reviewed by Mary Anne Raywid, which show that when families are allowed to select among different kinds of public schools, student achievement improves, graduation rates rise, and student attitudes improve. Parents become more involved, supportive, and satisfied with their public schools.

The elements essential to a good public school choice plan are: clear statement of goals, information for parents, fair and equitable admissions procedures, transportation for all students, requirements that state dollars follow students, and procedures for ensuring racial balance and promoting integration.

SOURCE:

Nathan, Joe, "Why We Need to Expand Choice Among Public Schools," Equity and Choice, Spring 1987.

SUMMARY:

"Research shows that we can not only significantly increase student achievement and reduce the dropout rate by providing more choice among distinctive, high quality public schools, but we can empower educators by allowing them to teach in schools that match their interests.

"Expanding choice among public schools, if done well, will enable some students to succeed who wouldn't make it in conventional schools. Expanding choice among public schools will, if done skillfully, improve achievement of average and already successful students. Expanding choice will, if done correctly, provide the kind of professional opportunities for creativity and decision-making that many teachers and their leaders are requesting."

SOURCE:

Olson, Lynn, "'Open Market' of Schools Needed, New Book Argues," and "Book Will Ignite Yearlong Debate About Choice, Educators Predict," Education Week, June 6, 1990.

SUMMARY:

Includes a review of the book Politics, Markets, and America's Schools, by John Chubb and Terry Moe, and a discussion of some of the choice plans which have been implemented in several cities and states. Also included in this issue are several pages of excerpts from the Chubb-Moe book.

SOURCE:

Raywid, Mary Anne, "The Dynamics of Success and Public Schools of Choice," Equity and Choice, Fall 1987.

SUMMARY:

"Choice is a value per se in our society; to extend choice is to open new options -- to broaden freedom and possibility." The author of this article, a scholar/advocate of schools of choice, discusses a number of "success dynamics" which alter traditional relationships in schools of choice. "Choice means instant empowerment for those who receive it, and it significantly alters the relation of chooser and chosen." The role of students and their families is significantly altered by choice. Teachers in school of choice start out with higher chances of success because they share a particular set of interest or goals or approaches to learning. A third change results from the breaking down of tight bureaucratic controls in schools, since choice requires more decentralized decision making and less uniformity.

The author also discusses three other sets of dynamics which occur when choice programs are in effect: "corporate excellence," which motivates teachers and administrators to work together for the success of the school; commitment to personalizing education so that the school becomes more attractive to and effective with students; and finally, self-renewal capacities, which the author suggests will assist the school to remain effective.

SOURCE:

Raywid, Mary Anne, "Family Choice Arrangements in Public Schools: A Review of the Literature," Review of Educational Research, Winter 1985, Vol. 55, No. 4.

SUMMARY:

This paper reviews the history of family choice opportunities in public schools. It looks first at the development of tracking, of individual alternative schools, and of options systems. Then, after exploring the possible targets of choice (curriculum, instructional periods, teachers, schools), it offers detailed examinations of the several choice models that have proved widespread: open enrollment plans, magnet schools, schools within schools, satellites and separate alternatives, and inter-district choice plans.

The article concludes with a discussion of the merits of various choice programs, their disadvantages, and raises a number of issues which must be addressed in the analysis of proposed choice plans. Schools of choice ...."are recognized not only as an answer for our most marginal students, but also as a source of challenging and fulfilling schooling for the ablest and the average. They are also perceived as a source of innovative and improved practice and as a mechanism for renewal and quality enhancement."

SOURCE:

Raywid, Mary Anne, "Public Choice, Yes; Vouchers, No!" Phi Delta Kappan, June 1987.

SUMMARY:

As the title of this article indicates, the author is a strong advocate for public schools of choice and an opponent of the use of vouchers to achieve choice. By vouchers she means an arrangement whereby individuals are in effect handed the funds to purchase the schooling of their choice, within and without the public sector. Raywid defines public school choice as the "deliberate differentiation of public schools, permitting students and their families to select the type of school each youngster will attend."

This article an analysis of these two plans, the arguments for and against them. The author concludes, "Choice also makes sense in strictly educational terms, because it enhances the efficacy of teachers, the accomplishments of learners, the satisfaction of parents, and the confidence of the public in its schools."

SOURCE:

Raywid, Mary Anne, "A 'Reform Plan of Disillusionment'," Education Week, November 1, 1989.

SUMMARY:

In this article, Mary Anne Raywid, a professor of education who has written extensively on school reform and public-school choice, provides readers with a careful analysis of the book by Myron Leiberman, Privatization and Educational Choice. The reviewer does not agree with many of Leiberman's assumptions nor with his faith in the free market and the profit motive to lead to great improvement in American education, but she does attempt to examine some of the issues carefully, and gives us a framework to use when we read this book.

SOURCE:

Raywid, Mary Anne, "Synthesis of Research on Schools of Choice," Educational Leadership, April 1984, Pages 70-78.

SUMMARY:

In this article, the author discusses two types of schools of choice, alternative schools and magnet schools. She reviews the research on organizational forms, structures, and processes; goals; instructional methods; and the curriculum.

She highlights the results as follows:

* For all types of students, from the neediest to the most outstanding, alternatives seem to produce significant growth and achievement: cognitive, social, and affective.

* Both attendance and student behavior improve in schools of choice.

* Alternative schools prove highly attractive to those who are associated with them--staff, students, and parents.

* The success of alternative schools is attributed to the benefits of smallness, choice, climate, and degree of staff autonomy.

SOURCE:

Schumacher, David, "Educators Tell Cavazos They Want a Choice about Choice," Education Daily, October 19, 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article reports on the first regional conference on choice, sponsored by the Department of Education. Many attending the conference felt that choice was being promoted by the Department as a priority program, although they suggested that issues such as drug use and discipline problems are more important. Others at the meeting said ED failed to answer certain questions, such as how districts would pay to transport students, how much choice programs would cost, and whether letting parents pick their children's schools will promote segregation.

SOURCE:

Schumacher, David, "ED Takes Modest Approach in Pushing Choice Concept," Education Daily, October 18, 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article reports on the town meeting held in East Harlem, NY, on October 17, to discuss programs and issues related to public school choice. The meeting, sponsored by the Department of Education, was attended by about 500 people. The message from the Washington education officials was "Choice isn't the only game in town, but it's one of the best."

SOURCE:

Seeley, David S., "Choice," Equity and Choice, Fall 1984, Volume 1, Number 1.

SUMMARY:

This article is a revision of Chapter 10 of David Seeley's book Education Through Partnership (Ballinger, 1981), in which the author proposes the concept of "educational partnership," based on the voice, choice, and loyalty of the educational participants. The model is an adaptation of the policy framework suggested by Albert O. Hirschman in his essay, "Exit, Voice, and Loyalty." This includes a discussion of choice as action, as an escape, as affirmation, and a method for achieving accountability.

"Choice, as an inherent aspect of a democratic society, is going to become an increasingly important element in educational policy, whether in the form of demands for alternative schools and programs or through pressure for more radical plans, such as vouchers and tuition tax credits."

SOURCE:

Seeley, David S., "The Choice-Equity Dilemma: A Partial Solution," Equity and Choice, Winter 1987.

SUMMARY:

In this essay, the author discusses the perceived conflict between equity and choice, and proposes two principles to guide public education policy:

(1) The quality of public education must be such that parents feel no need to choose a private school on grounds of quality alone.

(2) Public education must provide a wide range of VOICE and CHOICE within its own schools to respond to parents' and students' values and concerns.

"A public school system that provides high quality learning experiences for all children and a wide range of voice and choice, can overcome a large part of the inequity that results from poor people's effective lack of choice of private or exclusive public schools. In this imperfect world it may not be possible to do more than this."

SOURCE:

Snider, William, "Parley on 'Choice,' Final Budget Mark Transition: Bush Pledges His Support for Choice, But is Mum on Private-School Option," Education Week, January 18, 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article reports on the White House Workshop on Choice in Education and includes excerpts from President-Elect George Bush's speech.

SOURCE:

Wells, Amy Stuart, "Public School Choice: Issues and Concerns for Urban Educators," ERIC Digest, Number 63, March 1990.

SUMMARY:

This issues of the ERIC Digest includes a listing of the pros and cons on public school choice and what the research says about school choice. Various types of school choice plans are briefly described: controlled choice, magnet schools, and interdistrict and open enrollment.

The four recommendations for ensuring that choice is as equitable as possible are:

* a clear goal statement
* outreach to, and information and counseling for, parents
* a fair, unrestrictive, noncompetitive, and equitable admissions procedure, with particular attention paid to criteria for enrollment in the most desirable schools
* provision of adequate transportation for students

HOW TO ORDER:

ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education
Institute for Urban and Minority Education
Box 40, Teachers College
Columbia University
New York, NY 10027
212/678-3433

SOURCE:

Wells, Amy Stuart, "Quest for Improving Schools Finds Role for Free Market: Consumer's Choice in Public Education," The New York Times, March 14, 1990.

SUMMARY:

"Political leaders, including President Bush and education officials in at least 19 states, are promoting 'school choice' as a cure for what ails public education. Give people the freedom to choose among schools, the argument goes, and the resulting competition for students will force schools to shape up or shut down.

"But researchers and educators who have studied the issue strongly disagree about how much choice should be offered to whom. Some question whether such arrangements indeed lead to better education and more efficient schools; others argue that even if they do, letting poor schools gradually fail means writing off the educational prospects of thousands of children along the way."

This article summarizes the new choice plans in six states and discusses the experiences of District 4 in New York City, Cambridge, MA, St. Louis, MO, and several districts in Minnesota.

IV. Books, Reports, and Studies from a State Perspective

SOURCE:

Eagleton Institute of Politics, Choice in Public Education: Exploring a Strategy for New Jersey, December 1988, 61 pages.

SUMMARY:

This study was undertaken in response to New Jersey Governor Kean's interest in public school choice as an alternative educational plan for the state. It consists of three major parts:

1) review of existing literature on choice
2) examination of choice plans in Minnesota, Washington, Massachusetts, Cambridge (MA), and District 4 (NYC)
3) an analysis of the opinions of school officials, school personnel, and parents gathered from a survey conducted in 8 school districts in New Jersey.

The interviews with educators, board members and parents in New Jersey revealed support for the concept of choice in theory, but many concerns about feasibility and implementation. Many of the concerns reflected lack of knowledge about the design and operation of successful choice plans... (They) found the strongest support for a plan that would permit students to attend post-secondary institutions of their choice, for some of their course work, during their final years of high school.

The report recommends that state policy makers develop a strategy that includes:

1) broad public discussion and debate about key policy issues and how choice plans actually operate
2) a pilot approach to encourage participation of districts interested in experimenting with choice plans
3) consideration of post-secondary options plans for all districts.

HOW TO ORDER:

Eagleton Institute of Politics
Rutgers University
Wood Lawn, Douglass Campus
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

SOURCE:

Education Commission of the States, Choice: Minnesota's Enrollment Option Programs, February, 1989, Compiled by Minnesota Department of Education.

SUMMARY:

This is a compilation of memos, fact sheets, regulations, forms, questions & answers, statistics, and other informative documents about the various choice programs in the state of Minnesota.

The Table of Contents indicates the types of programs covered in this compilation: High School Graduation Incentives, Area Learning Centers, Educational Program for Pregnant Minors and Minor Parents, School District Enrollment Option (Open Enrollment), and Postsecondary Enrollment Option. In each section a copy of the state law related to the program is included and a list of questions concerning details of each program.

Also included in a section on financial arrangements, discussing the three methods by which a district can receive reimbursement for providing educational services to nonresident students.

HOW TO ORDER:

Minnesota Department of Education
Capitol Square Building
550 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

SOURCE:

Education Commission of the States, Policy Guide: A State Policy Maker's Guide to Public School Choice, February 1989, 59 pages.

SUMMARY:

This policy guide pulls together information on the types of public-school choice plans being implemented or debated across the country. It is designed to educate policy makers about the pros and cons of the several choice plans, about the issues they should consider and about the questions they should ask. Also included are the arguments that have been made for and against each type of plan.

Public schools of choice have earned support across the political spectrum because they are capable of addressing three policy priorities which appeal to diverse interests: freedom, equity, and school improvement. To satisfy community needs and concerns and to respond to the major challenges facing American society, public-choice plans should incorporate elements that address all three of these concerns.

The six types of programs described and analyzed in this report are: interdistrict choice, postsecondary options for high-school students, "second-chance" programs, controlled choice, teacher-initiated schools, and magnet schools. The report concludes with a discussion of the necessity of a strong family information system, to make a public-school choice program equitable to all families and to help families in making reasonable decisons about the educational program best suited to their children.

HOW TO ORDER:

Education Commission of the States
1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300
Denver, CO 80295
(303) 830-3692
$11.00 per copy

SOURCE:

Education Commission of the States, Public School Choice: Survey of State Initiatives, February 1989, 44 pages.

SUMMARY:

As of the preparation of this publication, more than 20 states had passed or were considering legislation to expand public-school choice. This publication briefly describes the different types of programs or plans, including interdistrict choice, second-chance plans, postsecondary enrollment options, intradistrict choice, and magnet and state-supported schools.

The second section includes summaries of the legislation enacted or proposed in 21 states (AR, AZ, CA, CO, FL, IL, IA, LA, ME, MA, MI, MN, MO, NE, NJ, NY, OH, OK, UT, WA, WI). In addition to the provisions of the proposals or statutes, the name, address, and phone number is provided for each state.

Included in the Appendix of this report are copies of the state statutes for Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, and Washington.

HOW TO ORDER:

Education Commission of the States
1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300
Denver, CO 80295
(303) 830-3692
$8.50 per copy

SOURCE:

Glenn, Charles L., Family Choice and Public Schools: A Report to the State Board of Education, January 1986, 54 pages, Massachusetts Department of Education, Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity.

SUMMARY:

This report discusses the experience in Massachusetts schools with parent choice, provides enrollment data for schools of choice throughout the state, and includes a description of the Cambridge Plan.

"A theme (included in this report) is that choice can be a powerful energy for the improvement of public education and equity--if properly guided and encouraged--or for its further weakening.

"Choice is not an unmixed blessing, nor do we support it as a panacea for all educational problems.... the past abuse of "freedom of choice" in Massachusetts and around the country fully justifies the reservations if not the hostility of many public education leaders.

"What we have sought to do, working closely with more than a dozen school systems, is to find ways to put parent choice to work to strengthen public education. We have sought to give the parents of minority children and of poor children an equal opportunity to make educational choices for their daughters and sons.

"In doing so, we have found the schools themselves improving, teachers and principals expressing a new satisfaction with their own efforts, a new commitment to continual response to student needs and the concerns of parents."

HOW TO ORDER:

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Education
1385 Hancock Street
Quincy, MA 02169

SOURCE:

Nathan, Joe, Progress, Problems, and Prospects of State Educational Choice Plans, July 1989, 33 pages. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Budget & Evaluation.

SUMMARY:

This report summarizes the recent developments in educational choice plans, with particular emphasis on state proposals and programs. The report covers four broad areas:

* The public's interest in allowing families to select among public schools;
* The responses of States and the federal government to this growing interest;
* New research on existing programs that permit choice; and
* Prospects for expansion of State efforts to promote choice among public schools.

Included is a summary of state actions promoting public school choice, and detailed information on Minnesota's choice options, Washington's educational clinics program, St. Louis' desegregation plan, Wisconsin's desegregation-choice plan, Massachusetts' choice plan, East Harlem's choice program, and the study of magnet high schools in four cities: Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York.

The report concludes with a section on the federal government's role in the development of choice plans and a three-page list of references.

SOURCE:

New Jersey Department of Education, Public School Choice: New Options for New Jersey Students, Parents and Educators, May 1989, 35 pages.

SUMMARY:

This report discusses three types of choice programs to be tried in the state of New Jersey over the next three years. They were selected partially as a result of 21 county-based hearings conducted in 1989, to determine the opinions of parents and citizens and to learn their concerns about the issues involved in public school choice programs.

(1) The Intradistrict Choice Program will fund at least six school districts to plan, implement and maintain a system of choice within each of the districts. Choice may be offered through an array of neighborhood schools and magnets.

(2) Project Attain will encourage dropouts to return to school by creating more options from which they can choose. They will be referred to one of 13 Youth Corps Centers, which will inform them of their many choices to enable them to continue their education through high school.

(3) The Learning Incentives Program will allow up to 1,000 students in FY 1991 to take courses outside their resident high school, in other high schools or at colleges and universities.

This report concludes with a question and answer section addressing issues related to this topic and the three programs selected for implementation in New Jersey.

HOW TO ORDER:

New Jersey Department of Education
225 West State Street, CN 500
Trenton, NJ 08625
PTM 900.15

SOURCE:

New York State School Boards Association, Public School Choice in New York State, October 1989, 34 pages.

SUMMARY:

This report addresses the issue of student and family choice in the public school system, particularly choice among schools within a district and between districts. The New York State School Boards Association conducted a survey on public school choice to which 404 (56%) districts responded. The results of that survey are the basis for this report.

Respondents to the survey ranged from large city districts offering a variety of choices for students and their families to small, rural districts with limited or no ability to offer choice among schools. Typically, the large, urban districts have developed extensive and exemplary choices among schools and programs for their students. However, a far greater number of New York's public school districts offer limited within district choices, and there is evidence that some districts have collaborated with neighboring districts to offer expanded educational options to their students.

Survey results indicate that many districts implement choice to accommodate the needs of families juggling work and child care. Transportation was cited as a major administrative concern, and was reported as the major cause of increased district costs. Very few districts were able to report that student achievement had been affected by choice policy implementation, and the survey showed that parent involvement did not increase as a result of choice.

HOW TO ORDER:

New York State School Boards Association
119 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12210
518/465-3474

V. Magazine and Journal Articles from the State Perspective

SOURCE:

Bangley, Jane, "Minnesota Tests Law of Survival in Statewide Open Enrollment Law," Education Daily, January 4, 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article discusses the implications of Minnesota's new open enrollment law which will apply to districts of 1,000 students or more beginning with the 1989-90 school year, and will be extended to districts of all sizes by the 1990-91 academic year. Under the law, parents of students may apply for a transfer to another district by January 1 for the following school year. Districts can refuse to accept transferring students only if racial quotas would be disrupted or if schools are too crowded. Only schools in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth can refuse to allow students to leave their districts if the transfers would damage their desegregation plans.

SOURCE:

Education Commission of the States, "Half of states show interest in giving students and parents more choice," State Education Leader, Winter 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article includes a brief run-down of state-by-state activity in legislative proposals and programs for school choice. It reports that more than 20 states have passed or are considering legislation to expand the educational options for students.

Four states -- Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota -- have passed legislation recognizing inter- and/or intra district public school choice as a way to improve and promote diversity among public schools and give students broader options.

Districts in at least 11 others states -- Arizona, California, Florida, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New York, Oklahoma, and Washington -- exercise inter- and/or intradistrict choice without state legislation officially permitting it.

Seven states -- Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, Main, Minnesota, and Washington -- have postsecondary enrollment options programs that allow high school students to take courses at a college or university.

For more information about choice programs nationwide, contact Jane Armstrong, (303)830-3632, or Kim Moyer, (303) 830-3637, Education Commission of the States, 1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300, Denver, Colorado 80295.

SOURCE:

Educational Testing Service, ETS Policy Notes, Volume 2, Number 2, March 1990, Educational Testing Service.

SUMMARY:

This issue of ETS Policy Notes includes three articles on public school choice:

1) "Montclair -- A Model Magnet" Discusses demographic data student achievement, racial balance in the schools, and the importance of program diversity in the Montclair schools.

2) "What the Research Says" Provides brief summaries of three types of public school choice programs: regulated voucher programs, alternative schools, and magnet plans. It outlines how to determine if these options provide quality education, racial balance, and diversity of educational program offerings.

3) "An Overview of Choice Programs Across the U.S. - Identifies the 13 states which have recently passed "Choice" legislation and briefly outlines the types of plans enacted.

HOW TO ORDER:

ETS Policy Information Center
Educational Testing Service
Princeton, NJ 08541
(609) 734-5694

SOURCE:

Finch, Lewis W., "My choice? Dump Minnesota's parental choice," The Executive Educator.

SUMMARY:

The views of a Minnesota Superintendent on the pros and cons of school choice. "At best, open enrollment offers little promise for school improvement. At worst, it might dash all hope for equal educational opportunity for many students."

SOURCE:

Finch, Lewis W., "The claims for school choice and snake oil have a lot in common," The American School Board Journal, July 1989.

SUMMARY:

"Choice is a populist notion that's not entirely without merit. But unrestricted choice, as adopted here in Minnesota, bears more political than educational value. At best, choice offers little promise for school improvement. At worst, unrestricted choice could dash all hope for equal education opportunity for many students."

SOURCE:

Hume, Maggie, "Choice Plans are not all Equal, Education Department Report Says," Education Daily, August 9, 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article discusses a new report published by the Department of Education, entitled Progress, Problems, and Prospects of State Choice Plans. Its author is Joe Nathan, senior fellow at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

The report emphasizes that choice plans can be poorly designed and could result in funding disparities and in skimming the best students. The report outlines the factors or elements which are present in effective choice plans.

SOURCE:

Iowa Association of School Boards, "Open Enrollment: Next Move?" Dialogue, May/June 1989.

SUMMARY:

On March 10, 1989, Iowa became the second state to enact open enrollment legislation, which gives K-12 students the option to leave their district and attend another of their choice, with the state aid and property tax allocation following the student. During the 1989-90 school year a third of the state's districts (those with enrollment of 1,000 or more) will participate in the plan; during 1990-91 all districts will participate, except for 12 with desegregation plans.

Other provisions are:

* the receiving district must accept the student unless it has "insufficient classroom space"

* athletes can't compete during the first year of the transfer, unless the sport was not offered at the resident district

* the request is for a period of 4 years, unless the student will graduate or the family moves

* the sending district must pay for transportation for low-income students; other students pay their own transportation

* the first year of implementation, transfers will be limited to no more than five percent of the district's enrollment.

SOURCE:

Kessler, Hope, "How Effective is Minnesota Choice?" Education USA, September 4, 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article provides some statistics on the participation in the various projects of Minnesota's choice plan. In 1988-89, about 5.2% of eligible students participated in the program which allows 11th- and 12th-graders to attend college classes. The state education department estimates that 3,600 high school students, out of a total of 725,000, have applied to leave their districts to earn their high school diploma in an alternative program.

Parents in every district will have the open enrollment option in 1990, the year Minnesota educators expect to see how choice will ultimately affect education in the state.

SOURCE:

Kolderie, Ted, "The Essential Principles of Minnesota's School Improvement Strategy," Equity and Choice, Winter 1988.

SUMMARY:

The following principles and assumptions underlying the Minnesota choice plan are listed and briefly discussed:

1. Choice is instrumental, a mechanism to improve schools.
2. Choice is the best instrument to cause improvement, by creating opportunities for students to move from schools that do not improve to schools that do.
3. Choice exists now. The question is: Who gets it?
4. In Minnesota "choice" does not mean "vouchers.
5. Minnesota is opening up choice within the public school system.
6. It is not "open enrollment," since the laws permit districts to decide whether or not they will admit non-resident students.
7. Districts may not be selective in whom they admit.
8. Choice is controlled for racial balance.
9. Choice is evolutionary, not revolutionary.
10. The responsibility for transportation is shared.
11. When the student moves, the money moves.
12. Intra-district programs also exist, but are separate.
13. Choice is for the kids who do not move, since it is intended to induce districts and schools to improve education for the great majority of students who choose not to move.

SOURCE:

Lamm, Richard D., "Can Parents Be Partners?" Phi Delta Kappan, November 1986.

SUMMARY:

This article summarizes the recommendations of the Task Force on Parent Involvement and Choice of the National Governor's Association. Key recommendations include:

* expanding opportunities for students by adopting legislation that permits families to select from among public schools (K-12) in their state and permits juniors and seniors to attend accredited public postsecondary institutions, with tax funds following the students;

* encouraging and assisting school districts in developing more effective parent-involvement techniques; and

* reminding parents that they can improve their children's achievement by working closely with the schools.

SOURCE:

Nathan, Joe, "Results and Future Prospects of State Efforts to Increase Choice Among Schools," Phi Delta Kappan, June 1987.

SUMMARY:

Government action to expand parental choice among schools has become more than a hot topic for debate. During the past few years, a number of states have found that providing choices among schools has helped to:

* reduce dropouts
* increase student achievement and appreciation of learning
* improve parental involvement and satisfaction
* encourage racial and economic integration
* provide extra challenge for students dissatisfied with the conventional program, and
* raise the morale of educators who were allowed to create distinctive programs from which families can choose.

In this article, the author outlines the current status of the choice movement, summarizes many of the state actions to encourage and facilitate the exercise of choice in local school districts in the state, and outlines the features of a desirable choice plan.

"It is easy to make some predictions about the next decade; other things are more difficult to foresee. Three trends are clear:

1) policy makers will show more interest in expanding choice among public schools;

2) regardless of what legislatures do, educational options will increase for affluent families; and

3) part of the pressure for expanding options will come from parents, business-people, and others outside education. It is not clear what leadership and response professional educators will offer, or exactly what kind of public policy will be developed."

SOURCE:

Pearson, Judith, "Myths of Choice: The Governor's New Clothes?" Phi Delta Kappan, June 1989.

SUMMARY:

"The bandwagon for choice is picking up speed, and Minnesota is leading the way. But Minnesota's open-enrollment plan will soon make choice of any kind a myth in many Minnesota communities." The author of this article suggests that there are many adverse consequences to the Minnesota choice plan. Open enrollment is elitist, in the sense that only those who have the means to do the driving will be able to choose. Once parents start to transfer their children from a district with declining enrollment, an irreversible spiral may begin which results in deteriorating quality of education for those children "trapped" in a declining district.

SOURCE:

Pipho, Chris, "Switching Labels: From Vouchers to Choice," Education Week, February 1, 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article, by the Director of the Education Commission of the States Clearinghouse, summarizes some of the legislative proposals in the states to establish choice programs. The author concludes that:

* Interest in choice is growing rapidly and increasingly is being combined with other issues such as restructured schools, parent involvement and strengthened course offerings for rural districts.

* Equity issues for both students and school districts will need further clarification. Racial changes creating imbalances and school finance losses for some districts potentially could create a new round of equity court cases.

* Transportation will be a growing concern, especially if the lack of transportation funds limit the types of students and families that will be able to participate in the programs.

SOURCE:

Public Education Institute, Quarterly, Winter 1989.

SUMMARY:

This issue contains two articles on choice:

1) "At Issue: Public School Choice" - A report of a Roundtable sponsored by PEI on December 2, 1989, on choice. Panelists included Judith Wilcox from the Montclair, NJ, Board of Education, Beth Baker from the Center for Policy Research in Education (Rutgers) and Michael Alves, educational planner for the Mayor of Boston.

2) "Choice, Classes, and Challenges," by Thomas B. Corcoran. This article explores the relationship of choice to the widespread practice of tracking students by ability or past performance. The author argues that the definition of choice should be broadened to allow students and parents to decide what level of work students will attempt.

HOW TO ORDER:

Public Education Institute
10 Seminary Place
New Brunswick, NJ 08903

SOURCE:

Rist, Marilee C., "'Choice' sells in Minnesota, but who else will buy it?" The Executive Educator, March 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article discusses the background and rationale for the public school choice options currently in operation in Minnesota. The author reviews and interprets the statistics which show that relatively few students are taking advantage of the opportunity to attend another school. Some of the negative aspects of choice programs are analyzed: the financial arrangements which stipulate that state aid goes with the student, thus reducing the budget of the school not chosen; the cost of transportation to another school system; and the fact that students who might benefit most do not have sufficient information to take advantage of the program.

The state is making an effort to confront these problems. A transportation subsidy is available for low-income students who want to transfer to another school system. And the state is working aggressively to get the word out to families who need it. So far, the evidence shows that the students most likely to take advantage of the transfer option are those who are doing poorly in school, which makes sense, since they are the ones who should be trying alternatives to the regular school.

SOURCE:

Snider, William, "Iowa, Arkansas Enact 'Choice'; Proposals Gain in Other States," Education Week, March 15, 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article outlines state legislation in Minnesota, Iowa, and Arkansas supporting "choice," and summarizes legislative proposals in 18 other states including Washington and Colorado. This article is accompanied by a map indicating the status of state action on open enrollment, post-secondary options, "second chance" programs, and "charter" schools of choice.

SOURCE:

Snider, William, "Washington Lawmakers Adopt School-Choice Package," Education Week, April 11, 1990.

SUMMARY:

A comprehensive school-choice bill has been passed by the Washington legislature, including a plan which mandates that all school districts adopt policies allowing intradistrict transfers by students. The measure grants two groups of students an absolute right to leave their resident district: those who wish to transfer to a school that is "more accessible" to a parent's place of work or to child care, and those experiencing "a special hardship or detrimental condition."

In all other cases, a parent will be required to show that a financial, educational, safety, or health condition of the student will be "reasonably improved" as a result of the transfer. Resident school districts are allowed to prevent students from leaving if their departure would adversely affect an existing desegregation plan.

SOURCE:

Walsh, Mark, "Colorado Lawmakers Mandate Open Enrollment Within Districts," Education Week, May 23, 1990.

SUMMARY:

The Colorado legislature has adopted a school-choice measure which will allow parents to send their children to any school within a district, so long as there is space available and the move does not disrupt a desegregation plan. The measure also authorizes a pilot test of cross-district open enrollment in three districts.

VI. Books, Reports, and Studies about Local Choice Plans

SOURCE:

Clewell, Beatriz C. and Myra F. Joy, Choice in Montclair, New Jersey. A Policy Information Paper, January 1990, 33 pages.
Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey.

SUMMARY:

Montclair, New Jersey is an urban school district that has achieved success in desegregating its schools through a voluntary magnet school plan based on choice. To study the effectiveness of Montclair's plan in providing racial balance and educational quality and diversity in programs through the use of choice, the authors conducted a case study in the district in 1987 and a follow-up in the summer of 1989.

This paper reviews a variety of public school choice programs, describes and evaluates the Montclair model. The paper outlines the factors contributing to the district's success and offers some recommendations concerning the development and implementation of similar public school choice plans.

The Montclair plan was originally implemented in 1977. In this magnet system, parents and students select a school, rather than being assigned to one. More than 95 percent of participants receive their first choice. Each school offers distinctive special programs; the fact that over half the students in the district's six elementary schools are bused indicates most are selecting a school outside their neighborhoods.

The results of this case study demonstrate that a better racial balance has been achieved through the implementation of the magnet plan. Performance in reading and math has improved since the choice plan was started.

HOW TO ORDER:

Policy Information Center
Educational Testing Services
Princeton, NJ 08541
Mail Stop 04-R
$5.00 per copy

SOURCE:

Henig, Jeffrey, Choice in Public Schools: An Analysis of Transfer Requests Among Magnet Schools in Montgomery County, 1989, 17 pages, Center for Washington Area Studies.

SUMMARY:

This paper analyzes the relationship between student applications to transfer into fourteen elementary-level magnet schools in Montgomery County, Maryland, and characteristics of those schools. In spite of officials' intent to structure incentives to promote integration, white families tended to prefer schools with lower proportion of minorities, and minority families tended to opt for schools in lower income, high minority neighborhoods. School characteristics most directly manipulable by school officials had little independent effect on transfer patterns.

Even in this suburban, affluent environment, giving freer rein to parental choice would seem to have done little to diminish the potency of racial and class factors in structuring the school environment. Nearly ten years after the first magnets were established, only one of the fourteen schools had developed a program distinctive and attractive enough to draw substantial numbers of transfer applicants.

"The lesson is not that choice and integration cannot exist. This, after all, is an analysis of only one district's efforts to actualize the choice idea. If the differentiation among programs was more sharply drawn, if information about transfer alternatives was more aggressively disseminated, it is possible that racial factors would have become less prominent."

HOW TO ORDER:

Center for Washington Area Studies
The George Washington University
2020 K Street, N.W., Suite 240
Washington, DC 20052
202/994-5236
$4.00 per copy

SOURCE:

Lewis, James H. and D. Garth Taylor, Options Without Knowledge: Implementing Open Enrollment Under The 1988 Chicago School Reform Act, March 1990, 25 pages, Chicago Urban League.

SUMMARY:

The 1988 school reform bill mandates phased-in implementation of an open enrollment plan in the Chicago public schools within the next two years. This report analyzes the open enrollment plan proposed and the current situation in Chicago. It points out that choice programs are already available in the Chicago Public School system.

Currently about 33 percent of students are in schools outside of their home attendance areas, enrolled in programs such as Magnet Schools, voluntary desegregation, special education, and bilingual programs.

The 1988 reform bill calls for a plan that is tantamount to a voucher system among public schools with transfers available to any open seat and per capita school funding following students who transfer. Based on recent information, there are about 14,000 elementary seats "empty" and therefore available for open enrollment. Of these, only about 5,000 seats are available in schools of high enough quality that a transfer of enrollment makes sense under the open enrollment model. There are, on the other hand, about 350,000 students who are eligible to participate in the program.

Because of the space limitations, only a very small percentage of children who can benefit from the choice plan and who qualify for participation will actually have the opportunity to do so. Transfers that do occur under open enrollment will tend to harm minority schools financially. Transportation of low income students, required by law, will cost between $4.7 million and $10.2 million. Open enrollment is unlikely to affect desegregation levels, but could marginally ease overcrowding.

The Chicago Urban League concludes that the outflow of black and Hispanic students from their present neighborhoods, and the outflow of funds from their schools, will add to class stratification within the school system and further separation of students who have motivation and information from those who do not. They recommend that open enrollment should be phased in gradually so that the schools are not adversely affected by a massive shift resulting from maximum use of the open enrollment option.

HOW TO ORDER:

Chicago Urban League
4510 S. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60653
(312) 285-5800

SOURCE:

Manhattan Institute for Policy Research. Model for Choice: A Report on Manhattan's District 4. Education Policy Paper, Number 1, June 1989, 21 pages.

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to describe the organization and accomplishments of the schools of choice program in Community School District 4 in New York City. The authors point out that the concept of parental choice has received little serious attention in the debate about educational reform in New York City, which primarily focuses on administrative structure, governance, and effective school practices.

This report describes the demographic characteristics of the East Harlem community in Manhattan where School District 4 is located. District 4 operates 44 schools in 20 buildings; a school is not equivalent to a building, but is an educational program organized around a central theme.

The section on Outcomes for Students presents data indicating that reading achievement has increased dramatically in District 4. This district was the lowest in the city in 1974, and now its students are performing at the citywide average level. There is also some indication that students in District 4 are performing better than their peers in terms of English language acquisition and in mathematics. Further evidence of the success of choice in District 4 is provided by data on the admission of District 4 students to selective public high schools.

HOW TO ORDER:

Center for Educational Innovation
Manhattan Institute for Policy Research
42 East 71st Street, New York, NY 10021
(212) 988-7300

SOURCE:

Willie, Charles and Michael Alves, A Proposed Controlled Choice Assignment Plan for the Boston Public Schools, December, 1988, Boston School Committee

SUMMARY:

This plan was requested by Mayor Raymond L. Flynn, in an effort to develop an acceptable, alternative plan for the assignment of students in the Boston public school system.

During a period of several months, the authors of this report met with staff from the Mayor's Office, members of the School Committee, Superintendent of Schools, and persons from the Boston Public Schools.

The proposed plan is racially fair and provides students with numerous school choices. This "controlled choice" student assignment plan is designed to be consistent with court orders in Morgan v. Nucci and is in conformity with the U.S. Court of Appeals ruling of September 28, 1987, concerning legal mandates for desegregation.

This report includes many basic statistics concerning demographic characteristics of students in the Boston schools, a specific proposal for dividing the city into three zones in order to implement controlled choice, and it discusses many practical issues which must be addressed in order to implement a choice plan. In an appendix, an effort is made to answer many parent complaints about the current system and to address why this proposal will improve the situation.

VII. Magazine and Journal Articles about Local Choice Programs

SOURCE:

Alves, Michael J., "Increased Parental Choice and Effective Desegregation Outcomes: A Cambridge Update." by Equity and Choice, Fall 1984, Volume 1, Number 1.

SUMMARY:

In March 1981, the Cambridge School Committee adopted the final phase of its long-range desegregation plan. Now under controlled open enrollment, parents are able to select at least three schools they would like their child to attend and to rank order them by preference. This article examines the enrollment data for the elementary schools and analyzes the results of the choice plan.

The researchers found that 75% of the new students entering the schools during 1982 and 1983 were assigned to their first choice schools, and 14.5% received either their second or third choices. Further data is presented to document the effect of the choice plan on desegregation efforts in the city.

SOURCE:

"Boston Weighs Drastic Changes in School Board," The New York Times, September 10, 1989.

SUMMARY:

Reports on Boston's plans to replace busing to achieve desegregation with a choice plan which will divide the city into three racially balanced zones and allow parents choose schools for their children with each zone. The plan began in the fall of 1989 for Kindergarten, first grade, and sixth grade.

SOURCE:

Clinchy, Evans, "It's Just Like One Big Family," by Equity and Choice, Winter 1986.

Clinchy, Evans, "Choice, Stability and Excellence: Parent and Professional Choice in Buffalo's Magnet Schools," Equity and Choice, Spring 1986.

SUMMARY:

These two articles discuss the school system in Buffalo, New York, which is achieving desegregation through magnet schools and parent choice. The city has 13 schools (out of a total of 75) that can be classified as magnet schools, including back-to-basics, continuous progress, open education, international studies, computer science, and gifted and talented. These magnet schools and programs enroll a total of 13,800 students, or 30% of the total school population of 46,000. However, there is still a long waiting list of applicants for the 2,100 magnet school seats available each year.

The article in the Winter, 1986, issues is written in the words of several parents who discuss their feelings and opinions about the schools their children attend. The second article, in the Spring 1986 issue, reflects the point of view of teachers. Also included is a statement from the Superintendent of Schools, Eugene Reville, who has been responsible for the redesign and restructuring of the Buffalo schools.

SOURCE:

Clinchy, Evans, "Looking Inside Schools of Choice: Eight Portraits," Equity and Choice, May 1986, Volume II.

SUMMARY:

The eight portraits of public schools are designed to give the reader a chance to learn about the diverse range of different kinds of schools that have been created in MA.

This diversity of schools that parents (and, in many cases, teachers) may choose exists as a result of efforts to provide low-income and minority children with educational equity and to provide all parents with a high quality education. The schools differ in their educational philosophies and organizational structures, and were selected to give the reader a representative sample of the range of diversity that public school systems can provide.

Nathan Hall School, Boston
Burncoat Preparatory Magnet School, Worcester
Rafael Hernandez School, Boston
Mill Swan Communications Skills Center, Worcester
Sumner Avenue School, Springfield
Arts Magnet School, Lowell
Graham & Parks Alternative Public School, Cambridge
City Magnet School, Lowell

SOURCE:

Darden, Edwin, "Boston Starts New Road to 'Choice' for Parents Who Shop for Quality," Education Daily, January 4, 1989.

SUMMARY:

The Boston School Committee has recently approved the framework of a plan that will divide the city into three zones of about 14,000 students each. Parents within each zone can judge for themselves which school provides the best education and send their child there.

Under the plan, each school would be regulated to preserve racial balance. The choice plan will tentatively affect kindergartners, first-graders and sixth-graders starting in September 1989. Other grades will be phased in in future years.

SOURCE:

Fizzell, Robert L., "Inside a School of Choice," by Phi Delta Kappan, June 1987.

SUMMARY:

The author, a teacher at the Alternative Learning Center, Evergreen Schools, Vancouver, WA, describes his experiences at the school, the types of students who chose an alternative school, the admissions procedures, and why he enjoys teaching there.

He discusses how the alternative school can serve students who were successful in regular schools, but chose an alternative so they could do even better; and students who were dropouts, truants, troublemakers, youngsters with serious emotional problems or those who were "turned off." "But perhaps the largest number of students enrolled in schools of choice are those who 'fell between the cracks' -- who were neither serious problems nor great successes -- in their regular schools."

SOURCE:

Grasso, Christopher, "Parental Choice Could Threaten Integration, Says Study of Maryland Program," Education Daily, September 25, 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article summarizes a study undertaken in Montgomery County, Maryland by a George Washington University researcher. Parents in Montgomery County have the opportunity to choose one of fourteen elementary school offering different specialties. The researcher concluded that white families are more likely to request that their children transfer into schools in higher-income neighborhoods with few minorities. Conversely, minority parents tend to send their children to schools in lower-income areas with fewer minority students. This demonstrates that choice plans do not necessarily result in more integration and less segregation.

SOURCE:

Jones, Judith Denton, "The Six School Complex: A 'Cluster' Provides Choice Among Local Public Schools in Washington, D.C.," Equity and Choice, Winter 1988.

SUMMARY:

This article discusses the formation of the Six School Complex in Washington, DC, in 1974, as a response to declining enrollment, white flights, and the threat that several small neighborhood schools would be closed. The cluster included four elementary schools, one middle school and a shared resource center. Each of the four elementary schools offered a special focus: bilingual education, environmental science, early childhood development, and arts and science.

The theme of parent choice was a major focus during the formative discussions and was reflected in the organization of the Complex. Parents were able to enroll their children in any one of the four elementary schools as long as space was available.

"The Six School Complex has succeeded in achieving its original explicit goals: to increase the number of neighborhood children attending local public schools, and to broaden and improve the quality of education in the schools at low cost."

HOW TO ORDER:

Dr. Judith Denton Jones, The Six School Complex: A Successful Innovation in Washington, D.C.'s Public Schools, Washington, DC, 1987, 232 pp. $10 each.

Order from The Six School Council
c/o Fillmore Arts Centers
35th and S Streets, N.W.
Washington, DC 20007

SOURCE:

Meier, Deborah, "Central Park East: An Alternative Story," Phi Delta Kappan, June 1987.

SUMMARY:

The author, principal and one of the founders of Central Park East School, in East Harlem, NY, describes the establishment of her school in 1974 and the development of three elementary schools and one secondary school since that time. She discusses the effectiveness of the schools, and the success of the students who have attended them.

"The oddest thing of all is that the incredible experience of District 4 has had so little impact on the rest of New York City. Here and there another district will experiment with one or another of our innovative practices. But few are willing to break out of the traditional mold. Generally, their alternative programs are mini-schools, with relatively little real power as separate institutions and without their own leadership. Often they are open to only a select few students and thus are resented by the majority.

Sometimes they are only for the 'gifted' (often wealthier and whiter) or only for those having trouble with school."

SOURCE:

"In Nation's First Open-Enrollment State, the Action Begins," Education Week, March 15, 1989.

SUMMARY:

Describes the situation facing a small school district in northern Minnesota, where 319 of the district's 1,074 students have applied to transfer to neighboring districts. If they do so, the district will be required to cut $1.2 million from next year's budget.

SOURCE:

Piercy, David and Marily Clotz, "Parents have a choice," by School Safety, Spring 1990.

SUMMARY:

This article describes the choice system in Eugene, Oregon, which allows students and parents to choose their school. Nearly a third of the 18,000 students do not attend their neighborhood school. Since the early 1970s, students and their parents have taken advantage of policies that allow them to select from a wide range of educational choices. These choices include guaranteed attendance at a neighborhood school, transfer to any other neighborhood school that has space, attendance at one of the district's 13 alternative school programs, attendance in a neighboring school district (trades between districts), and, at the secondary level, dual enrollment in a magnet school program.
The most important issues which have emerged in the Eugene, Oregon, system are:

* Accessibility - the necessity to take steps to ensure that all students have equal access to the various programs; no recruitment allowed; use of lottery procedure for admissions decisions.

* Competition among programs - there is no evidence that the most popular school programs attract the best students, most involved parents, or most innovative staff.

* Parent involvement -- the most successful schools have been those with the most intensive parent involvement.

SOURCE:

Rist, Marilee C., "Walter Marks," The Executive Educator, June 1990.

SUMMARY:

This article describes the "System of Choice" designed by Walter Marks, who became superintendent of the Richmond (CA) Unified School District in July 1987. During his first three years in the position, Marks implemented a choice plan, which enables parents to choose the school best suited for their child.

Some of the specialties emphasized in different schools include:

- Gifted and talented schools;
- Classical studies schools, based on Mortimer Adler's Paideia Program;
- Montessori;
- Whole-language school;
- International studies; and
- Future studies.

SOURCE:

Schumacher, David, "Once on the Skids, East Harlem Makes Academic Gains with Choice," Education Daily, October 20, 1989.

SUMMARY:

With a 96% minority population of largely poor, single-parent families, District 4 hit the skids in the early 1970s. Average daily attendance at the district's 50 schools was below 50%, and students ranked at the bottom of New York City's 32 districts in reading and math skills.

But in 1973, the district instituted reforms including a choice system for all of its junior high schools. Today it ranks 16th in the city in achievement, and average daily attendance is about 80%. A study by the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research concludes that "The schools of choice in East Harlem are succeeding where many other more traditional schools in the city are failing."

SOURCE:

Snider, William, "California District Makes Choice Initiative Centerpiece of Plan to Reinvigorate Schools," Education Week, December 13, 1989.

SUMMARY:

Advocates of parental choice often cite Richmond School District as a prime model of a successful choice plan. All but 2 of the district's 47 schools are open to all students in the district. The choice system, instituted by Walter Marks who was named superintendent in 1989, is part of a larger reform plan, which includes redesign of the curriculum, a staff development effort, and special alternative programs for potential dropouts.

At the elementary level, the schools offer a choice of four major philosophies, including: Gifted and Talented, Future Studies, Classical Studies, and International.
Parents may also choose three other types of schools -- Montessori, whole language, and university lab.

This article discusses many aspects of the Richmond choice plan, including staff morale, funding, and the lack of teacher and parent involvement in the process.

SOURCE:

Snider, William, "School Choice: New, More Efficient 'Sorting Machine'?" Education Week, May 19, 1989.

SUMMARY:

This article reports on the findings of several studies on parental-choice programs. The reports summarized are:

1) The New Improved Sorting Machine, which reports on the admission processes used by various types of high schools in Boston, Chicago, New York City, and Philadelphia.

The study concludes that these cities have five-tiered school systems that offer unequal opportunities to students from differing backgrounds.

2) A report on the San Jose school-desegregation plan which relies heavily on voluntary choice by parents and students to achieve racial balance. Michael Alves, author of the report, concludes that the "free-choice" policy does little or nothing to improve racial balance in the schools.

3) A series of articles in the St. Louis Post Dispatch analyzing the enrollment patterns in the magnet schools and the county schools. The conclusion is that the best black students are attending magnets or county schools rather than the city schools.

VIII. Material Especially Useful to Parents

SOURCE:

Bamber, Chrissie, "Public School Choice is Coming: Who Will Be Ready and Who Will Be Left Behind?" NETWORK, Summer 1989, Vol. 14, No. 6, National Committee for Citizens in Education.

SUMMARY:

An overview of the current status of the public school choice "movement." This article briefly summarizes the efforts to implement choice plans in Minnesota, Los Angeles, and other districts. It presents arguments for and against such plans, and questions whether current programs will assist the families most at risk: low income, minority, non-English speaking, rural, and inner city families who have traditionally been most poorly served by public schools.

Included in this article is a checklist of "Characteristics of Good Public School Choice Programs," which outlines the elements which parents and citizens should look for in any proposal for a choice plan, and which they should insist upon if they want to ensure that the plan meets the needs of all children in the community.

HOW TO ORDER:

National Committee for Citizens in Education
10840 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 301
Columbia, MD 21044
Send $2.00 for back issue of NETWORK.

SOURCE:

Charpentier, Roland E., "Parents Choosing the Schools They Wish Their Children to Attend," Equity and Choice, Winter 1985, Volume I, Number 2.

SUMMARY:

This article describes the process used by the Parent Council and Superintendent of Schools in Worcester, MA, to design a choice plan which would be responsive to parents' wishes. They conducted a survey sent home to parents of all 14,000 elementary students in the city. Using the survey results as a guide, the superintendent set up different types of magnet schools to reflect the kinds of education parents wanted for their children.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Roland E. Charpentier
Worcester Public Schools
Magnet School Planning Office
20 Irving Street
Worcester, MA 01609
617/799-3033

SOURCE:

"Choices: Schools of Choice, 1989-90," Sunday, January 8, 1989. Special Section of The Courier-Journal, Louisville, KY.

SUMMARY:

This 12-page Section is intended to inform parents of the many school choices available to them in the Jefferson County Public Schools. All of the schools are listed in a chart, which provides information about their focus and emphasis and whether they offer such programs as English as a second language, Chapter 1, Head Start, vocational education, honors program, etc. Information is provided concerning application procedures and how to obtain further details.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Optional Programs Office
241 Durrett Education Center
4409 Preston Highway
Louisville, KY 40218
502/456-3323

SOURCE:

Citizens League, The School Book, 1990-91: A Comprehensive Guide to Elementary Schools in The Twin Cities. 1989, 554 pages.

SUMMARY:

This impressive book was published by the Citizens League to provide parents in the Twin Cities metropolitan area with information on elementary schools. The material will enable parents to learn about the various options for their child, if they wish to choose to send him or her to a different school district.

In addition to information on all the schools in the area, this publication includes helpful sections such as a checklist on "Things to look for when visiting an elementary school," Minnesota's laws regarding school choice, and procedures for transferring into another district.

The information on each elementary school includes: enrollment, class sizes, extracurricular programs, how the school communicates with parents, special services, transportation information, names of principal and contact person, and a paragraph "About Us," in which unusual characteristics of the school and the teaching methods are described.

HOW TO ORDER:

Citizens League
708 So. Third Street, Suite 500
Minneapolis, MN 55415
$12.95

SOURCE:

Clinchy, Evans, Consumer's Guide To Schools of Choice...For Parents and Other Educators, January 1987, 152 pages, Institute for Responsive Education.

SUMMARY:

This guide is intended to give parents "real-life" descriptions of what actually goes on in schools of choice. What is different in schools that advertise themselves as having an emphasis on a particular style or philosophy of teaching, i.e. "basic skills," or "classical education," or "child-centered, development approach" -- or a particular curricular emphasis, on "the arts" or "science and technology?"

The Consumer's Guide elaborates the assumptions about how children learn that lie behind such labels and provides a checklist that enables parents to decide whether their aspirations for and knowledge about their children will match up with the labels that schools of choice use in describing themselves.

Each section of this guide describes specific schools which illustrate the type under discussion, discuss what children should learn, how the school should be organized, how children should be graded, the kind of student best suited for this kind of school, and provides a parents' checklist of specific questions to ask about the school.

Four types of schools are included:

* Fundamental Schools, "Back-to-Basics"
* Continuous progress, non-graded, individually guided education
* Montessori, Developmental or "Open" Education
* Schools with Curricular Specializations

The report concludes with a section on parent involvement and shared governance.

HOW TO ORDER:

Institute for Responsive Education
605 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
$12.00 per copy

SOURCE:

Clinchy, Evans, Planning for Parent Choice. A Guide to Parent Surveys and Parent Involvement in Planning for Parent and Professional Choice in the Public Schools, January 1987, 66 pages, Institute for Responsive Education.

SUMMARY:

This publication offers a step-by-step guide to surveying parents, and provides a method and a survey instrument that has been used over a period of five years in four Massachusetts urban school districts. In addition to including copies of several different surveys used in these districts, the report discusses survey administration, analysis of the results, uses of the data, and how they can be used in various choice proposals.

A flow-chart is included which outlines stages of the planning process, time lines to be considered, how to get parents and the community involved, informing the media, and professional involvement. There is also a section on "Some Nuts and Bolts Issues About Surveys," which includes discussion of sampling, response rate, how to increase response rate, what happens when choices of parents and professionals don't match, and what to do with a high proportion of "Maybe" responses.

HOW TO ORDER:

Institute for Responsive Education
605 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
$6.00 per copy

SOURCE:

"At a Glance: Cambridge's Parent Information Center," Equity and Choice, Volume II, Number 3, Spring 1986.

SUMMARY:

This article describes the Parent Information Center, established to provide all parents in Cambridge, MA, with information on all 13 elementary schools in the district, so that they are able to exercise their choice as to the school their child should attend, with full knowledge of the options available to them.

The goals, staff, organization, training, outreach, image, and funding of the Parent Information Center are briefly described.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Margaret Gallagher
Parent Information Center
Charles G. Harrington School
850 Cambridge Street
Cambridge, MA 02141

SOURCE:

Glenn, Charles L.,"Letting Poor Parents Act Responsibly," Equity and Choice, Spring 1987.

SUMMARY:

In this essay, the author puts forth a very persuasive argument that poor parents can be "empowered" to intervene effectively in the education of their children, that they want to make decisions about schools, and will be able to make informed choices about the best schools for their children if they have the opportunity to do so.

"School choice is a powerful way to enhance equality of opportunity, and thus to promote justice. Liberty is also a fundamental American value, and we believe that responsible citizenship is learned through its exercise. Parents can become more responsible and more effective through exercise of the liberty of school choice."

SOURCE:

Hallett, Anne Carlson, "Parental Choice and Voice in Public Education," Equity and Choice, Spring 1986.

SUMMARY:

"...we must guard against moving toward a system in which parents' choices for their children have the effect of making the parent-school relationship a private one. The parent checks, then chooses, then walks away satisfied, turning over full authority to the professionals, content that his/her child is in good hands."

"Working for greater choice...is too narrow a goal. We need parents, supported by state policy, who are engaged in the life of the school in an ongoing way -- not parents whose role potentially stops at the schoolhouse door."

SOURCE:

Minnesota Association of School Administrators, "How to Pick Your Child's School: A Guide to Selecting the Best School to Meet Your Child's Educational Needs."

SUMMARY:

This attractive flyer suggests five steps to take when selecting a school that is the best match for you and your child:

1) Consider the unique learning needs of your child.
2) Call, write or visit the district administrative office.
3) Contact individual schools for more specific information.
4) Visit the schools you are considering.
5) Contact the parent organizations or parents who are familiar with the school to provide more information to you.

Under each of these steps is a list of specific suggestions and questions to ask.

HOW TO ORDER:

Minnesota Association of School Administrators
1884 Como Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
612/645-6272

SOURCE:

Minnesota Department of Education, "How to Select a School for Your Child: A Family Guide," December 1988. Printed as a Public service by US West Communications.

SUMMARY:

This booklet was prepared to assist parents to choose a school for their child, as provided by state law in Minnesota. The questions in this booklet are designed to help parents get the information they need in selecting a school. The headings in this flyer indicate the topics covered:

What Do I Want From a School for My Child?
How Does My Child Learn?
How Do I Find Out about Schools?
How Do I Conduct a School Visit?

Each section contains checklists of questions and factors to consider in the school choice decision. Also included in this flyer is a list of phone numbers in Minnesota for parents to call for more information and support.

HOW TO ORDER:

Minnesota Department of Education
Capitol Square Building
550 Cedar St.,
St. Paul, MN 55101

SOURCE:

Minnesota Department of Education, "Those Great Minnesota Schools: Educational Options," October 1988.

SUMMARY:

A two-fold flyer which summarizes Minnesota's 12 Enrollment Options, with brief information on eligibility, who would be interested in this option, and how and when to apply. The toll-free 800 number is provided as well as a form to mail in order to receive information about other program options under state law.

HOW TO ORDER:

Minnesota Department of Education
Capitol Square Building
550 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55101

SOURCE:

Mueller, Van D. "Choice: The Parents' Perspective," Phi Delta Kappan, June 1987.

SUMMARY:

Six reasons why parents will inevitably be accorded wider choice and greater voice:

* The primary responsibility for the education of children lies with the family
* Research findings confirm that students learn more when their parents are involved in their education
* Choice for parents means empowerment and voice
* Parents' satisfaction with schools increases as their influence on their children's school environment grows.
* Parental choice makes for more accountability -- both for parents and for teachers and administrators
* Choice allows public schools to become more diverse

"Increasing parental choice among public schools is an idea whose time has come. It deserves wide support from parents and educators."

SOURCE:

National Committee for Citizens in Education, Public School Choice: An Equal Chance for All?, 1990, 24 pp. softcover.

SUMMARY:

This booklet provides an introduction to public school choice for parents, citizens and educators. It emphasizes plans which give every family a fair chance to choose. The publication includes characteristics of equitable plans, a checklist for choosing the best school for each child, and suggestions for reaching low-income parents and those whose primary language is not English.

HOW TO ORDER:

National Committee for Citizens in Education
10840 Little Patuxent Parkway
Suite 301
Columbia, MD 21044
$5.00 plus $2.00 for postage and handling

SOURCE:

The National PTA, "Guidelines on Parental Choice -- In Education."

SUMMARY:

This five page document presents the PTA views on choice. It includes: (1) a list of factors and criteria which should be present in order for choice plans to be effective and successful, and (2) a list of 19 questions to be raised by PTAs and parents to be informed and to be sure that the choice proposal meets the educational needs of ALL children.

HOW TO ORDER:

The National PTA
700 North Rush Street
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 787-0977

SOURCE:

Parent Center, "Choice: A Guide for Parents to District Five Schools," 14 pages.

SUMMARY:

This booklet provides a list of elementary and middle schools in Community School District Five, identifies their areas of specialization, and presents test scores in reading and mathematics for all of the schools.

It also provides some useful information about children's rights and responsibilities, parental rights, and how parents can best work with the school. It encourages parents to visit the Parent Center to learn more about becoming involved in the schools, and receiving assistance in choosing a school for their child.

HOW TO ORDER:

Parent Center
Community School District Five
433 West 123 Street
New York, NY 10027
212/690-5919

SOURCE:

Schumacher, David, "Parents: Choice for Some is No Choice At All," Education Daily, October 18, 1989.

SUMMARY:

Parents, at a town meeting held in East Harlem the evening before one of the Education Department's regional meetings on public school choice, spoke out about their concerns that choice programs do not benefit all children. All schools need more money and attention, but often it is the magnet schools which receive the funds. Students who have the opportunity to attend magnet schools may receive a good education, but what about those children left behind in poor, neighborhood schools?

SOURCE:

Weston, Susan Perkins, Choosing A School For Your Child, with contributions from Joe Nathan and Mary Anne Raywid. 1989, 30 pages, Programs for the Improvement of Practice, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. Also available in Spanish.

SUMMARY:

This free publication issued by the federal government provides capsule guidance on issues to consider when choosing a school -- or making a decision to improve the school which your child attends currently. It packs a lot into its 30 pages including a 4-page checklist to complete on each school you consider.

Questions relate to curriculum, school philosophy, important policies, proof of student achievement, physical plant, parent involvement, reputation, special questions for private and church-related schools, and admissions requirements and procedures.

Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos and his staff view school choice in the broadest possible terms, from the neighborhood school to home teacher. In between are the choices parents more often think of: magnets and private schools. The booklet defines each parent's task as making the best decision for an individual child based on the child's needs and the choices available.

HOW TO ORDER:

Single copies free from:

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VIII. Individuals and Organizatons to Contact for Further Information

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Equity and Choice, published three times a year by the Institute for Responsive Education, includes many articles on issues related to choice. Subscriptions are $15.00 per year.